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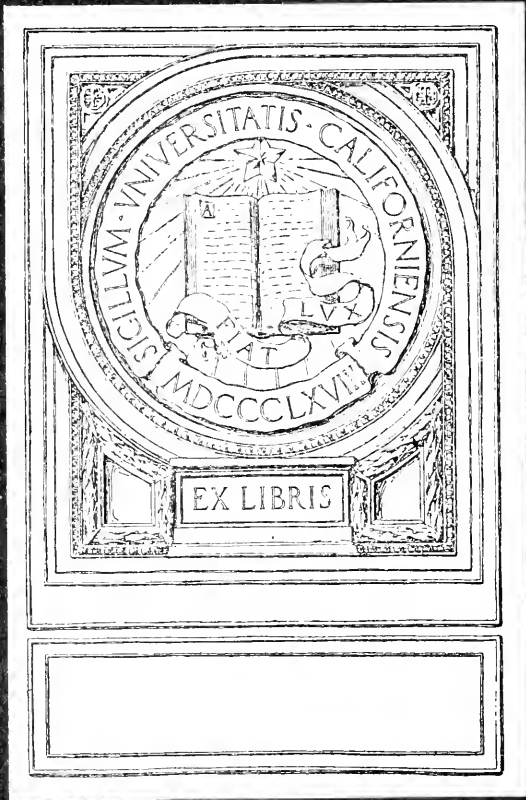
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ACTS OF PARLIAMENT
LEGISLATURE XXIV—SESSIONS 1913-15.

CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES N. XXXII
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SUBMITTED
TO THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT
BY THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
(SONNINO)

AUSTRIA - HUNGARY

Session of the 20th May, 1915.

PUBLISHED FOR
THE ROYAL ITALIAN EMBASSY IN LONDON
BY
HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

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THE
AMERICAN

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No. 1.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 9th December, 1914.

I REQUEST your Excellency to convey the following verbal communication to Count Berchtold.

The present military advance of Austria-Hungary into Serbia constitutes a fact which cannot avoid becoming the subject of examination by the Italian and Austro-Hungarian Governments on the basis of the stipulations contained in Article VII. of the Triple Alliance. The same article places the Austro-Hungarian Government, in the case of even temporary occupations, under the obligation of first coming to an agreement with Italy and also of granting compensation. The Imperial and Royal Government should therefore have consulted us and entered into agreement with us before causing its army to cross the Serbian frontier. To render our attitude effectively clear we must remind the Imperial and Royal Government that basing its actions precisely upon what is set forth in Article VII., it restrained us during our own war against Turkey from carrying out several military operations which would certainly have shortened the duration of that war. The naval operations in the Dardanelles also gave rise to formal reservations on the part of the Imperial and Royal Government. Italy has an interest of the first importance in the preservation of the full integrity and political and economical independence of Serbia. The Austro-Hungarian Government has certainly declared upon several occasions that it has no intention of making acquisitions of territory to the prejudice of Serbia, but a declaration so formulated does not amount to a binding engagement, and assurances of the same general character afforded us by the Imperial and Royal Government on the occasion when Turkey embarked upon war, allow us to foresee the possibility of certain political modifications in the Balkan Peninsula. Moreover the very invasion of Serbia, although this should prove in the end to be no more than temporary, has already sufficed seriously to disturb the equilibrium that prevailed in the Balkan Peninsula and to afford us the right to compensation. It should further be observed that the stipulation of the aforesaid Article VII. gives Italy the right to compensation also on the score of advantages other than territorial which the Austro-Hungarian Government might secure in the Balkan region. The Italian Government considers that it is necessary to proceed without delay to an exchange of views and thence to a specific treaty with the Imperial and Royal Government concerning this intricate situation which closely affects the most vital political and economical interests of Italy. Unmistakable signs of uneasiness are to be observed in the Italian Parliament and in Italian public opinion, and these clearly manifest the tendency of Italy's national aspirations. The Royal Italian Government is compelled to take this

uneasiness and these aspirations seriously into account. The understanding which I earnestly invite upon these grounds between the two Governments would have the result of eliminating in the future all danger of those deplorable incidents arising out of friction and diffidence which are to-day so painfully frequent, and it would render instead possible and natural between the two nations those relations of cordial and constant friendship which are the common desire of both and without which all official agreement necessarily remains incomplete and barren. Therefore in making clear to Count Berchtold the friendly spirit which has prompted these representations, I beg your Excellency to invite him to make known to us, with the diligence demanded by the case, the point of view of the Imperial and Royal Government.

SONNINO.

No. 2.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Berlin.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 9th December, 1914.

I REQUEST your Excellency to inform Herr von Jagow of the full text of my telegram to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna. You will also please make clear to that Minister for Foreign Affairs the state of Italian public opinion and the connection established in Italy between questions of foreign and of internal policy. The trend in favour of neutrality manifested by a section of public opinion does not imply the renunciation of Italian interests in the Balkans and the Adriatic or of the national aspirations, but rather the persuasion that these interests and these aspirations will be effectively safeguarded if neutrality is maintained. And should it happen that the contrary became manifest, the reaction in public opinion would be extremely grave and would have consequences which it is the duty of the Royal Italian Government to foresee and if possible to forestall.

SONNINO.

No. 3.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Telegram.)

Vienna, 12th December, 1914.

recd. 12th.

I HAVE conveyed to Count Berchtold the verbal communication with which your Excellency charged me. He replied that the military operations of Austria-Hungary had not yet led to a real, or even to a temporary, occupation of Serbian territory. That such occupations as followed upon those operations were abandoned on the following day or in the course of the following days. In fact that the city of Valjevo, occupied some fifteen days ago, had shortly afterwards been evacuated in consequence of the subsequent military operations, and that on the score of such momentary occupation it was certainly not admissible to cite Article VII. and demand compensation. When I then pointed out to him

that the occupation of Belgrade had already taken place some days ago, and that Austro-Hungarian troops were still present in that city, Count Berchtold replied that these troops would perhaps be obliged to evacuate it shortly. I considered it advisable to draw Count Berchtold's attention to the fact that Article VII. was clear and explicit since it referred in precise terms to temporary occupation and drew no distinction regarding the character of the time-limit contemplated. Therefore, whatever their character, the occupation so far effected by the Austro-Hungarian troops from the first day of their penetration into Serbian territory evidently came under the provisions of that article, which imposed upon the Imperial and Royal Government the obligation of a previous agreement with ourselves. Moreover, as I had already pointed out to him, the very invasion of Serbia, although no more than temporary, entitled us to compensation since in itself it was sufficient to disturb the equilibrium established in the Balkan Peninsula by the treaty. When further I reminded him of the opposition by the Imperial and Royal Government to our military and naval operations during the Italo-Turkish war on the occasion of which that Government had invoked Article VII., Count Berchtold observed that he had declared himself opposed to those operations on the strength of the principle of *status quo* upon which the treaty was based. And he added that it was not possible to compare such operations with those upon which the Imperial and Royal Government was now engaged in Serbia. The former were, in fact, contrary to the spirit of the treaty, since had they been carried into effect they must have jeopardised the very existence of the Ottoman Empire; whilst the latter had for their only purpose the defence of the integrity of the Monarchy threatened by Serbia, whose aim was to deprive it of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Therefore the war against Serbia was not aggressive but defensive, and the Imperial and Royal Government was now fighting to maintain the *status quo*. I replied that I certainly could not admit that the temporary occupation of territory hitherto carried out by Austria-Hungary in Serbia was other than opposed both to the spirit and to the letter of the treaty. It was in fact evident that such occupation threatened the equilibrium of the Balkan Peninsula and would moreover destroy the balance of power which the treaty itself provided should be maintained. And in this connection I reminded him that on several occasions and at the very moment when war broke out, the Royal Italian Government had declared to the Imperial and Royal Government that it could never consent to any measure detrimental to the integrity and political and economical independence of Serbia, since that was opposed to our interests and opposed also to the provisions of the treaty. Count Berchtold replied that the Imperial and Royal Government had no intention whatever of annihilating Serbia. I remarked that as early as the 25th July last I had, in the Count's absence, declared to Baron Macchio that if Austria-Hungary should proceed to even temporary occupation of territory without previously obtaining

our consent she would be acting in violation of Article VII. of the Triple Alliance, and that we therefore made all reservations to safeguard our eventual liberty of action as well as our rights and interests. The Royal Italian Government considered that the time had come to refer to that declaration, being certainly unable to admit the proposition advanced by the Imperial and Royal Government to the effect that Austria-Hungary had carried out so far no occupation, even of a temporary nature, of Serbian territory. To this Count Berchtold replied that he did not understand how Article VII. could be cited in connection with temporary occupation, the result of occupation of war, which might be abandoned from one day to the other according to the fortunes of war, and which could not, therefore, be the subject of a previous agreement based upon the principle of compensation. But should real occupation of Serbian territory, even though of a temporary character, have taken place, the Imperial and Royal Government was disposed to conform with us to the stipulations of the said agreement. Notwithstanding my repeated and urgent insistence to convince Count Berchtold that the advance of Austro-Hungarian troops into Serbia, and the temporary occupation of territory effected by these imposed upon the Imperial and Royal Government the obligation of a previous agreement with us based upon the principle of compensation, he persisted in the opinion manifested above, and concluded by saying that he did not think that this was at present a case calling for an exchange of views with the Royal Italian Government.

AVARNA.

No. 4.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Telegram.)

*Vienna, 13th December, 1914.
recd. 13th.*

THE principal argument adduced by Count Berchtold to avoid a conference with the Royal Italian Government on the subject of the application of the stipulations of Article VII. of the Treaty of Alliance concerning the occupation of a part of Serbian territory by Austro-Hungarian troops, was that the occupation itself was neither of a temporary nor of a permanent character, but was merely momentary, since it was no more than the inevitable and immediate consequence of military operations, and since it might therefore come to an end from one moment to another as a result of changes that might take place in the Serbian military situation.

In view of this I consider it advisable, in support of our contention, to inform your Excellency that the issue No. 342 of the Gazette of the Austro-Hungarian Army contains the appointment of Major-General Oscar to the post of Commandant of the city of Belgrade.

AVARNA.

No. 5.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Telegram.)

*Vienna, 14th December, 1914.
recd. 15th.*

I LEARN indirectly that Herr von Tschirsky, in pursuance of instructions communicated to him by Herr von Jagow, was yesterday successful in prevailing upon Count Berchtold to enter into an exchange of views with the Royal Italian Government on the subject of Article VII. and to settle the matter of the compensation due to us in the event of military or permanent occupation of Balkan territory by Austria-Hungary.

AVARNA.

No. 6.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 16th December, 1914.

I AM surprised at the proposition advanced by Count Berchtold. I approve the answers returned to him by your Excellency. We cannot accept the distinction drawn by Count Berchtold between temporary occupation and momentary occupation resulting from military operations.

Such a distinction is contrary to the spirit and the letter of Article VII.

By the fact of the advance of the Austro-Hungarian troops into Serbia and of the occupation of that territory to such an extent even that a military governor of Belgrade has been appointed, that Government is placed under the obligation of coming to an agreement with Italy on the basis of compensation.

Nor yet can we accept the arguments of Count Berchtold on the subject of the precedent of the Libyan war. On that occasion the Austro-Hungarian Government based itself upon Article VII. to hinder us not only from temporary and momentary occupation but also from simple military operations such as bombardments without occupation. That attitude on the part of Austria-Hungary was a source of very serious loss to us, alike in a military and a political sense, since it encouraged the resistance of Turkey which felt indirectly supported and protected. The argument that during the Libyan war the *status quo* was threatened by us cannot be sustained. Article VII. refers expressly to the *status quo* in the East and in the Balkan region, and not to the Ottoman Empire. And the military expedition of Austria-Hungary into Serbia has disturbed definitely the *status quo* and the equilibrium provided for by Article VII. I repeat that we have not given Article VII. the prohibitive application set up by that Government during the Libyan war, but we have not thereby intended nor do we intend to renounce the rights guaranteed to us by the article itself.

It is well in this connection to remember the exact terms employed by that Government in its communications during the Libyan war.

In your telegram of the 5th November, 1911, your Excellency informed us that Count Aehrenthal had declared to you that "action of ours on the Ottoman coast of Turkey in Europe or on the islands of the Ægean Sea, could not be permitted either by Austria or by Germany, because it would be opposed to the Treaty of Alliance." Such a declaration was made to your Excellency in consequence of a rumour current to the effect that Italian war-ships had made use of searchlights in the neighbourhood of Salonica. In your telegram of the 7th November, 1911, your Excellency informed us that "Count Aehrenthal considers the bombardments of ports in European Turkey, such as Salonica, Cavalla, etc., opposed to the provisions of Article VII." In April of 1912 (your Excellency's telegram dated 21st April) Count Berchtold lodged strong protests because the Italian squadron before the Dardanelles had damaged the forts in replying to the shots that were fired upon it from them; on that occasion Count Berchtold declared to you that "if the Royal Italian Government desired to recover its liberty of action the Imperial and Royal Government could do the same. But he could not admit that we should in future undertake similar operations or any action whatsoever that should be opposed to the point of view manifested in the preceding conferences. Should any such operation be undertaken by us it might be attended by grave consequences."

To your Excellency's statements that the Royal Italian Government had repeatedly declared that it could not admit that the integrity and the political and economical independence of Serbia should be attacked, since that was opposed to our interests and to the provisions of the Treaty, Count Berchtold replied that the Imperial and Royal Government had no intention of "annihilating" Serbia. I cannot consider this reply satisfactory. Between the maintenance of integrity and of political and economical independence on the one hand, and annihilation on the other, there is a wide margin, and it is precisely this margin that must become the subject and basis of negotiation and of agreement between ourselves and Austria in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty. Permanent or temporary occupations of territory, even if only partial, or any advantage of a character other than territorial, even if merely involving political influence or economical privileges, are to be the subject of previous agreement. Hence it does not suffice that Count Berchtold should have declared to you that he is disposed to come to an understanding in the event of a real occupation even if only temporary.

And I regret that Count Berchtold should not think that this is at present a case calling for an exchange of views with us. I beg your Excellency to insist on sustaining our point of view. The agreement, according to Article VII., should be made before and not be contemporary with or subsequent to the fact or facts which may give rise to negotiations or to the agreement itself.

I beg your Excellency to bear in mind that we consider gravely detrimental to our interests the possibility of protracted conversations with Vienna concerning the interpretation of Article VII. whilst events are maturing that may lead to our finding ourselves confronted by a *fait accompli*.

In your conference with Count Berchtold please confirm all that I communicated to you in my telegram of the 9th instant on the subject of the tendencies to be observed here both in Parliament and in public opinion, and also on the subject of the great importance, in our common interest, of establishing relations between our two countries on a solid and permanent basis of trust and enduring friendship.

SONNINO.

No. 7.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 20th December, 1914.

(Telegram.)

recd. 21st.

I CONVEYED to Count Berchtold the substance of your Excellency's instructions.

He informed me that he was disposed to enter at once into an exchange of views with your Excellency on the subject of Article VII. to determine the indemnities to which Italy is entitled in the event of any temporary or permanent occupation in the Balkans carried out by Austria-Hungary. He therefore stated that he agreed as follows :

(1) That between the maintenance of the integrity of Serbian independence and that State's annihilation there was a wide margin which should become the subject and basis of agreement between ourselves and Austria-Hungary as provided by the Treaty ;

(2) That according to the provisions of the Treaty even partially permanent or temporary occupations of territory, or any advantages of a character other than territorial, even if merely of political influence and economical privileges, are to be the subject of previous agreements on the basis of compensation ;

(3) That the agreement provided for by Article VII. should be anticipatory of and not contemporary with or subsequent to the fact or facts which gave rise to negotiations and to the agreement itself.

When I had, finally, confirmed all that I had communicated to Count Berchtold in the course of our last interview, to which matters reference is made in the last sentence of your Excellency's telegram, Count Berchtold reminded me of how in the past he had constantly and assiduously laboured to render ever more intimate our reciprocal relations. There had been, it is true, certain incidents, some of them extremely disagreeable, such as the Hohenlohe decrees, which he had profoundly deplored, but which could not hurt the bonds in which the two countries were united. Further, the question of Albania, notwithstanding the grave vicissitudes through which it

had passed and the difficulties to which it had given rise, had caused the two Governments to co-operate in a common action and had been the basis of an understanding. He could not, therefore, in the common interest, fail to agree with your Excellency on the supreme importance of establishing between the two nations relations based upon enduring trust and constant friendship, this being the object which he had always kept in sight.

AVARNA.

No. 8.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassadors at Vienna and Berlin.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 20th December, 1914.

I RECEIVED a visit yesterday for the first time from Prince von Bülow. He informed me that he had come to Italy for the purpose of being in a better position to interpret to Berlin our present state of mind and point of view, and to explain to us the point of view of Germany. His intention was to strive to improve the good relations and the understanding between the two nations.

Before leaving Berlin he had received news of the representations made by us at Vienna with a view to a discussion on the subject of Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance. He had stated at Berlin that we were in the right and that we had every reason to desire this discussion concerning the compensation which would be accorded us when Austria should have obtained any given results. And he claimed that this expression of his opinion had produced its effect also at Vienna.

I remarked to Prince von Bülow that the situation in Italy could be summed up in very few words. That the majority of the nation was in favour of the preservation of neutrality and ready to support the Government in this, but only upon the presupposition that by means of neutrality it should be possible to obtain the fulfilment of certain national aspirations. This task, the practical difficulties of which I fully recognised, was what the Government aimed at accomplishing.

Its accomplishment might involve prejudicial consequences reaching far beyond so negligible a matter as the mere fate of a Ministry. The Savoy Monarchy derives its greatest strength from its representation of the national sentiment. And Prince von Bülow, who was acquainted with our country, might easily verify for himself the truth of this assertion.

He had said on one occasion in the Reichstag that the Triple Alliance was the best means of averting war between Austria-Hungary and Italy.

To this Prince von Bülow remarked that he had quoted a dictum of Count Nigra to the effect that Austria-Hungary and Italy could not be other than either allies or enemies. I replied that if in such a statement there should be a little exaggeration there is also a deal of truth. The alliance, however, could not be advantageous and fruitful if there was a lack of perfect cordiality between the

parties and if it became necessary to pause at every step to verify the terms of the signed agreements. It was incumbent to foresee and to provide for the future, even beyond the present war, and it was our duty therefore to place things upon a more solid and permanent basis. Wherefore it was necessary to remove all possible sources of misunderstanding and friction, so that future relations with Austria, the existence of which were also necessary in the interests of Italy, might become as cordial and natural as those prevailing between ourselves and Germany.

Prince von Bülow thanked me for my frankness and recognised the necessity of working for this object. It was his desire that the relations between Germany and Italy should become even more cordial.

To-day I have seen Baron Macchio.

He told me that having been compelled in August suddenly to leave Vienna and come to Rome to replace Herr von Meroy, he is taking advantage of the present holiday-time to pay a brief visit to his home. I replied that it gave me pleasure to think that he would thus be able better to inform Count Berchtold of the situation in Italy, and I alluded to the representations made by us at Vienna on the subject of the application of Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance.

Baron Macchio said that he was aware of the representations made by us, and that as a consequence his Government contemplated entering into a discussion on the subject, unless it should be enabled to determine the matter more satisfactorily at once as a result of the development of the war. He again pointed out that in the Austrian operations in Serbia there were none of the elements of a "temporary occupation" in the sense of Article VII.

I replied that this did not appear to me to be exact. A Governor even had already been appointed to the city of Belgrade. And if a comparison were made between the invasion of Serbia and all that had happened during the Libyan war when Austria had placed her veto upon our bombardment of Salonica and the Dardanelles, there could be no doubt on the score of our present right to demand the application of Article VII. It was my desire to create a situation that should place the relations between Austria and Italy on a basis of increased cordiality, so that it should be possible to avoid the daily incidents which at present tend to ruffle them, incidents which are aggravated in consequence of this very state of mutual diffidence.

SONNINO.

No. 9.

The Italian Ambassador at Berlin to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Telegram.)

*Berlin, 6th January, 1915.
recd. 6th.*

IN compliance with the general instructions conveyed to me by your Excellency I have neglected no opportunity to seek to obtain the support of the German Government to the representations

made at Vienna by the Royal Italian Government on the subject of the interpretation of Article VII. of the Treaty. Having referred to it again in the course of my interview yesterday with Herr Zimmermann, I was informed by him that Prince von Bülow had made from Rome the same statements which I have several times made to him here: namely, that it would be extremely difficult for the Royal Italian Government to maintain, without some of the national aspirations being satisfied, the attitude of neutrality in which it had the support of the majority of Parliament and of the people. Herr Zimmermann assured me that he took this state of things fully into account and that he had never ceased to insist that they should also be taken into account in Vienna and that the inevitable conclusions drawn from them should be carried into effect. But that so far he had invariably met with a refusal, the motives of which, although perhaps not based upon the dictates of practical politics, were yet such that he could not find them unjustifiable.

Nevertheless, he persisted in his efforts and he did not yet despair of the result. The conviction that it is absolutely necessary for Austria to resign herself to some sacrifice to Italy if she wishes to avoid disagreeable events has by now penetrated all governing circles here.

BOLLATI.

No. 10.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 7th January, 1915.

IN the course of an interview which I had yesterday with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, he told me that he observed now a more warlike inclination in Italian public opinion than had been evident when he was leaving for Vienna in December last.

I replied that I did not think that this was so; that in the last two months public opinion had become calm, accepting a state of neutrality according to the programme of the Government; that nevertheless it was desirable freely to recognise that even the most neutralist section of public opinion proceeded on the assumption that by our neutrality we should be able to realise some of the national aspirations; and that it was precisely out of this assumption that all the difficulties of the situation arose.

This led me back to the question of compensation in accordance with Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance, which was the subject of the representations I made to Vienna about a month ago. Count Berchtold had now admitted Italy's right in the present circumstances to cite Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance and the desirability of discussing the compensation eventually to be granted to Italy in consequence of action on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which tended to modify the equilibrium of the Balkan States.

The withdrawal of the Imperial troops from Serbia seems perhaps to render such a discussion less timely, depriving it

character of urgency if not of actuality, nor could I wish by over-insistence to convey the impression that I was seeking a quarrel with Austria-Hungary.

But, on the other hand, the logical and political reasons calling for a discussion of the question of compensation remain unimpaired ; besides which the circumstances of an attack by the Imperial armies upon Serbian or other Balkan territory may, and, indeed, probably will, present themselves again.

The fundamental logical reason that justifies and demands the discussion which I invited lay in the war undertaken by the Empire, the ultimate aims of which were absolutely opposed to the clearest and most obvious political interests of Italy in the Balkan Peninsula.

The political reason is to be found in the necessity to create once and for all between Austria-Hungary and Italy, if it is desired to provide for the future and to render advantageous and fruitful the alliance of the two States, a situation calculated to eliminate the continual friction and misunderstandings between these nations and to provide instead relations of sympathy and cordiality such as will render possible a normal co-operation towards common aims of general policy.

Any alliance that is not sustained by friendship and that does not of itself contribute to the increase of that friendship must necessarily be barren and futile.

To arrive at such a situation it is necessary when discussing the indemnities due, according to Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance, to have at once the courage and the tranquillity to face serenely the delicate question of the possible cession of territories at present forming part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Is the Imperial and Royal Government disposed to discuss the question even if carried on to these grounds ?

Being neutral it was not possible for us at present to discuss the matter on a basis of eventual compensation involving territory possessed at present by other belligerents, because that would be equivalent to our taking part as from to-day in the contest.

Baron Macchio in answer admitted the expediency of a free discussion of the entire matter, putting aside all considerations of susceptibility and *amour propre*. He pointed out the possibility of compensation in relation to Albania, a country in the neighbourhood of Italy, and easy of access.

I answered that in Albania I could perceive only one real interest for Italy, a negative one, consisting, that is to say, in our hindering any other Power from invading it ; and that, for the rest, it was a region that had no attractions for us.

The Austrian Ambassador remarked that every reciprocal engagement should be founded upon the principal of *do ut des* ; wherefore Italy, too, would have to determine what share she would contribute, or else it would become necessary to determine the share of advantages which should accrue to Austria-Hungary at the end of the war and Italy's advantages would be proportioned thereto. Austria-Hungary did not look for territorial increase at the expense of Serbia.

I replied that the advantages might be other than territorial ; and that it was possible to ensure many advantages of influence and of political, economical, and moral preponderance, all of which were within the sphere of Article VII.

And the principle of *do ut des* would also be observed if, within predetermined limits, one of the contracting parties were to allow the other a free hand in its actions in return for precise and settled concessions.

To Baron Macchio's repeatedly urged observation that all agreement should be allowed to depend upon the ultimate results of the war I replied that if we were to control Italian public opinion, inclining it favourably towards our agreement we must be able from the outset to show a minimum of advantages that were tangible and assured, and not merely dependent upon uncertain and remote eventualities. Otherwise any engagement must remain without practical effect.

Baron Macchio having indicated the extreme difficulty of discussing questions of this nature, not only on the score of *amour propre* and susceptibility but also on account of the precedents which would be set up in an Empire constituted as was the Austro-Hungarian, I answered him that the detachment of the few Italians who had remained Austrian subjects could not set up a precedent dangerous to the Empire because since 1859 and 1860 the Italian element had become so exiguous in numbers as not to be able to hold its own against the other nationalities associated with it and could never entertain the aspirations common to the other nationalities of any development within the ambit of the Empire. I cited the instance of Trieste, where at the very time when the relations between the two States had become most cordial, the pressure of the Slavs had induced the Imperial Government to make decrees that were adverse to the Italian element, notwithstanding the harm resulting from this to the international situation itself. For the Italian element in Austria the only possible alternatives were either to disappear stifled by the pressure of the other nationalities, Slav and German, or else to detach itself from the Empire.

It might be more advisable in the interests of the general and international situation for that Empire to proceed to such amputation.

It was agreed between us that all these questions should be discussed in a friendly spirit, each party putting forward its ideas and proposals, and thus debating the matter both at Vienna and at Rome.

SONNINO.

No. 11.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 15th January, 1915.

FOR your Excellency's exclusive information I give you the substance of some recent interviews of mine.

11th January, 1915. *First interview.*

Prince von Bülow informed me that Germany was sending to Vienna Count von Wedel, who was Ambassador at Rome, and afterwards for many years at Vienna, and this with the object of inducing the Austrian Government to cede the Trentino to Italy.

The chief difficulties that are foreseen and from which it would be desirable to discover an issue, are, said Prince von Bülow, of two kinds :

First, of a military character ; the military element would oppose the discharge of all soldiers proceeding from that region which it is proposed to cede. It is said that the Trentine in the Imperial Army are sturdy fighters. Would it not be possible to postpone the discharge of these soldiers until peace shall have been declared ?

Second, of a dynastic character, it would be undesirable to hurt the susceptibilities of the Emperor who bears among his titles that of Count of Tyrol. A formal way out of this might lie in the cession of the territory of the ancient Bishopric of Trent, which formed part of the Germanic Roman Empire and which was incorporated with the Tyrol at a comparatively recent date. But what precisely, Prince von Bülow asked me, were the confines of the Bishopric ?

I replied that in regard to the military questions, I could not perceive the possibility of postponing the discharge of the soldiers derived from the provinces to be ceded ; that given the cession of territory, the retaining under arms of its conscript soldiers would have a deplorable effect upon Italian public opinion.

In regard to the question of the Bishopric of Trent, I could not now say anything.

In the formation of the first Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy the Trentino had been detached from Tyrol and it extended as far as Bolzano.

Prince von Bülow remarked that at least the greater part of the population of Bolzano was German, whilst in the valley of Merano it was entirely German.

He suggested that I should go into the question of the confines of the ancient ecclesiastical Principality of Trent, saying that he, too, would seek information, and adding that it was desirable to do everything possible in order to facilitate Count von Wedel's task.

Prince von Bülow talks as if it should be understood that in the event of our being offered Trentino by Austria in return for our engagement to remain in absolute neutrality, we are to exact nothing further.

Second interview.

In the afternoon of the same day, the 11th January, Baron Macchio whilst discussing with me Article VII. and the question of eventual indemnities, spoke of Albania, saying that he could not understand why Italy should no longer attach to it that importance which it had manifestly attached to it in years past.

I replied, repeating that our interest in Albania was, if anything, a negative one, namely that no other Power should occupy it ;

and that we had no desire to be caught in the toils of internal Balkan questions and to find ourselves inevitably and permanently in opposition to Serbia and Bulgaria. That, for the rest, Austria, too, now appeared to attach less importance to Albania. That we would confine the question of compensation to the provinces that were the object of popular nationalist sentiment.

Baron Macchio was persistent, being unable to resign himself to this dismissal of Albania from the subject. He remarked that Article VII. concerned the Balkans only.

I replied that it concerned Balkan modifications as grounds upon which to treat for compensation, but that this did not at all imply that all compensation should be exclusively confined to the Balkans.

Baron Macchio referred to our armaments and to our concentration of troops, particularly in the provinces nearest the Austrian frontier. He pointed out the friendly neutrality which was to be observed when one of the allies considered that it was not obliged to take part with the others in hostilities.

Third interview.

Prince von Bülow called upon me to-day, the 14th January, and asked me whether it were not possible eventually, when an agreement regarding the Trentino should have been concluded, to refrain from announcing the fact to the public or even to Parliament, the Government merely informing the latter that it held assurances that the greater national aspirations would be satisfied.

I told him that this would be absolutely impossible; that the public imagination would become excited to such an extent that when eventually it learnt what was really involved universal disillusion and reaction must follow. It would be even better to do nothing; or to announce nothing as concluded.

As to the form of the cession, so far as the Trentino was concerned, the Emperor might perfectly well, even after that had taken place, retain his title of Count of Tyrol, because the Trentino was administratively united to the County of Tyrol only in 1802. It would suffice that in making the cession the boundaries should be precisely determined because in the course of centuries the boundaries of the ecclesiastical Principality of Trent had varied considerably. I added that I did not believe that popular Italian sentiment would content itself with the Trentino alone. That a permanent condition of harmony between Austria and Italy would not be attained until it were possible entirely to eliminate the irredentist formula of "Trent and Trieste."

Prince von Bülow urged that we should not increase our demands because Austria would certainly prefer war to the cession of Trieste. And he pointed out to me all the importance attached by Austria to the possession of that port. He was of opinion that he could succeed in the matter of the Trentino, but not further. He repeated that it was of the first importance to Germany and to Italy that an agreement should be reached and war avoided.

SONNINO.

No. 12.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 18th January, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 18th.

IN a conversation to-day with the Minister for Foreign Affairs here I submitted the various arguments expounded by your Excellency to Baron Macchio in the course of the interview with him concerning the application of Article VII. of the Treaty of Alliance.

Baron Burian remembered that he desired again to declare to me that in the event of a real temporary occupation by Austria-Hungary, the Imperial and Royal Government was prepared to give Italy the compensation due as agreed by the said article.

He then observed that he did not understand how it could be asserted that Austria-Hungary had undertaken this war with aims opposed to the interests of Italian policy in the Balkan Peninsula; the object which Austria-Hungary had in view upon going to war with Serbia was that of safeguarding the interests of the Monarchy, and consequently, the existing *status quo* which was threatened by that Power.

The war, therefore, as the Imperial and Royal Government had repeatedly declared, was defensive and not aggressive in its aims.

I drew Baron Burian's attention to the fact that we were interested in the maintenance of the political and economical independence of Serbia and the equilibrium of the Balkan Peninsula.

It was evident that this independence and this equilibrium were gravely menaced by the present war, and that consequently it could not be regarded by us as other than contrary to our interests in the Balkans.

When Baron Burian rejoined that Austria-Hungary did not at all aim at modifying the *status quo* in the Balkans or at the acquisition of Serbian or other territory, since it was not intended to increase the Serb population of the Monarchy, I remarked that the independence of Serbia and the equilibrium of the Balkans would have been threatened not only by territorial acquisitions that Austria-Hungary might have effected in that kingdom or elsewhere, but also by any advantage of influence and political preponderance, and further by economical, moral and other influences which undoubtedly were all contemplated by Article VII. of the Treaty.

Baron Burian told me then that he was disposed to co-operate with your Excellency so as to eliminate the continual friction and misunderstanding between the two nations and to set up reciprocal relations upon a basis of sympathy and cordiality, and, further, that he was prepared to endorse your Excellency's remarks to Baron Macchio concerning the sterility and unprofitableness of an alliance that was not sustained by friendship.

Alluding then to the eventual cession of territories at present appertaining to the Monarchy, he expressed his surprise that the

question should have been carried on to such delicate grounds, these territories being looked upon here as "*erbland.*" In pointing out the grave difficulties to which such a question will give rise, he added that if the demand formulated by Italy were known to the public it could not fail to provoke the liveliest resentment in all quarters of the Monarchy. I remarked that it did not seem to me that the demand to which he alluded need hinder the friendly discussion of the question itself, starting out upon the assumption that this prejudicial condition might come to be eliminated in the course of that discussion.

When Baron Burian pointed out that the cession of territory we requested might constitute a precedent in a Monarchy such as the Austro-Hungarian, I explained to him that the detachment of a few Italian subjects of Austria could not amount to a precedent dangerous to the Monarchy, and on that subject I submitted to him the other arguments employed by your Excellency with Baron Burian. In speaking thereafter of our occupation of the Dodecanesian Islands and Valona, Baron Burian remarked that Article VII. of the Treaty might have been cited on the score of these occupations, and he alluded in passing to an ulterior expansion on our part of the occupation of Valona.

I replied that it did not appear to me that the said article could be cited on the score of those occupations. It was well known how the occupation of the Dodecanesus came to take place. As for the occupation of Valona, it was occasioned by the state of disorder then prevailing in Albania and it aimed at safeguarding the deliberations of the Conference of London, Italy being the only Power that was not involved in the war.

For the rest, the efforts of the Royal Italian Government had for object to preserve as far as possible at present the Albanian *status quo* pending the ultimate deliberations concerning Europe to be held at the conclusion of the war. I added that Albania had for us no interest other than a negative one, namely that of hindering any other Power attempting to invade it, and that it was a region offering no attractions to Italy. We had no desire to be caught perforce in the toils of internal Balkan questions and to find ourselves in permanent conflict with Serbia or any other Balkan Power. I had no doubt that Baron Macchio would have informed him of what was really the situation in Italy. The majority of the population desired neutrality and was determined to support the Government, but this upon the presumption that the national aspirations would obtain some satisfaction.

It must not be forgotten that our Monarchy derived its strength particularly from its representation of the national sentiment. It was in consequence of this that the Royal Italian Government had carried the question of compensation into the region towards which the eyes of popular sentiment were turned, so that it might derive thence the necessary strength to undertake and maintain the eventual diplomatic engagements. I reminded Baron Burian of what he had declared to me on the occasion of my first visit,

namely that he would strive to the end that the alliance might subsist in the future. But to attain that object it was necessary, as I had already pointed out, to give the alliance what it lacked at present, namely a perfect reciprocal cordiality, placing matters upon an assured and enduring basis, and such was your Excellency's aim in carrying the question of compensation on to the grounds which I had indicated to him. To this Baron Burian replied that he recognised that the object was a friendly one and that he was grateful to your Excellency, but that he could only remind me of what he had already said on the subject.

In conclusion Baron Burian remarked that he did not understand how Italy, as a neutral Power, could not consent to a discussion on the subject of compensation relating to territory appertaining to other belligerent States whilst it could demand on the score of compensation territories appertaining to Austria-Hungary which was also a belligerent State. It did not seem to him that something could be demanded from Austria-Hungary which yet could not be demanded from other Powers that were likewise belligerent. He engaged me therefore to invite your Excellency to a more complete and clear expression of ideas on the subject.

Baron Burian concluded by saying that he would further consider the question which I had brought before him, and that he would consult more closely the terms of Article VII. of the Treaty, which he had not at hand just now, and that he expressed himself as prepared to discuss the question itself with me in a friendly spirit, going into the suggestions and proposals that might be put forward concerning it.

AVARNA.

No. 13.

The Italian Ambassador at Berlin to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Berlin, 22nd January, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 22nd.

THE Chancellor having come to Berlin for a couple of days, expressed the wish to see me, and I had an interview with him yesterday evening. He told me that he was informed of the exchange of views that had been initiated between the Italian and the Austro-Hungarian Governments, and that he ardently desired that this might lead to a mutually satisfactory result, so as to maintain and consolidate the good relations between the two Powers since these constitute a cardinal point in the policy of the German Government. To this end the German Government had supported the representations we made at Vienna and will continue to support them with all possible insistence; but it was necessary, he added, that the Royal Italian Government should also do what it can to make the task easy, conducting the operations with that prudence and moderation demanded by the peculiarly delicate nature of the subject under discussion.

BOLLATI.

No. 14.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 23rd January, 1915.

WITH regard to the request made to your Excellency by Baron Burian in the interview of the 18th instant, for fuller particulars on the subject of my exclusion of territories belonging to a third belligerent, and to Baron Burian's remark that Austria-Hungary is also a belligerent State, it seems to me almost superfluous to explain that we are asking Austria-Hungary to cede territories already possessed by that State as its own, whilst the Austro-Hungarian Government would prefer to discuss the cession of territories appertaining at present to one of its adversaries, and that in this lies all the difference.

Whether belligerent or not, any State can give to a neutral something that is its own or it can enter upon an exchange, without acceptance on the part of the latter constituting the least violation of neutrality; always provided (and this would not be now in question) that the thing transferred should not be the very subject of contention between the donor and the third parties; but the same may not be said when it becomes a question of granting a territory which the conceding State does not possess as its own, but which belongs instead to one of its belligerent adversaries; in such a case the acceptance of such an offer of territory on the part of the neutral State must obviously be considered an unfriendly act, and tantamount to taking sides against the present owner of the actual territory.

From all quarters to-day a new Austro-Hungarian expedition against Serbia is announced. Such an expedition tends to disturb the political situation in the Balkans, increasing on the one hand the influence and interests of Austria-Hungary, and imperilling on the other the conditions of Serbia, the preservation of whose full political and economical independence represents an Italian interest of the first magnitude.

In these circumstances it is now desirable once more to draw the attention of that Government to the particular importance and urgency assumed by the preliminary discussion concerning the compensation to be stipulated by Italy in accordance with Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance.

I beg your Excellency to lay the foregoing before Baron Burian immediately upon his return to Vienna, and to telegraph.

SONNINO.

No. 15.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassadors at Vienna and Berlin.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 26th January, 1915.

PRINCE VON BÜLOW informed me to-day that it will not be possible to arrive at a practical conclusion of the negotiations with Austria-Hungary regarding the application of Article VII.

of the Treaty unless the Italian Government states precisely what it requires, since the Austro-Hungarian Government fears that if it concedes anything the demands will be multiplied and it will have to face a "*Schraube ohne Ende*."

We are urged once more not to demand too much.

I replied that as long as the Government of Vienna declines to agree explicitly and clearly that the discussion be carried into the region of the cession of territories at present belonging to the Empire, it is not to be exacted that we should detail the quantity and quality of our demands. So far Vienna has always replied in a vague and general manner, urging prejudices or objections upon grounds of principle.

Let Vienna announce that it accepts this basis of discussion and I can then consult my colleagues for the purpose of formulating precise demands.

I added that I was somewhat discouraged by the course of events. The officious Press of Vienna (as, for instance, the *Tageblatt* and the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*) published inopportune declarations that excluded all possibility of the cession of territories now appertaining to the Empire. In this manner any eventual concession was rendered extremely difficult.

Meanwhile the news of the concentration of Austro-German troops on the frontiers of Rumania and Serbia, for purposes of aggression, against the latter, according to some, or against the former, according to others, foreshadows a new impending danger and is giving rise in Italy to a strong movement of public opinion in favour of our taking part in the war.

I have laboured strenuously to pacify the public mind, to moderate its desires and hopes, and to urge confidence in diplomatic measures; but I am becoming only too well convinced that whilst at home I am shouldering the daily increasing burden of political responsibility, abroad no effort will conduce to any practical result, and that notwithstanding the indubitable goodwill, which I willingly recognised, on the part both of Prince von Bülow and of the German Government, we shall be completely "*bernés*" by Austria-Hungary.

SONNINO.

No. 16.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 28th January, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 29th.

I CONVEYED to Baron Burian the particulars he requested on the subject of the refusal of the Royal Italian Government to accept a discussion on the basis of eventual compensation in connection with territories belonging to other belligerents. Commenting upon the expression "offer of territory," contained in your Excellency's telegram, Baron Burian said that according to Article VII. of the Treaty it was not for the contracting party that had obtained advantages to put forward an offer of compensation, but for the other contracting party to formulate its demands on the subject. Therefore

it was not for Austria-Hungary to offer to Italy the compensation due, but for Italy instead to make known her demands.

To begin with I pointed out to Baron Burian that it did not seem to me that your Excellency was alluding by that expression to Article VII., which, for the rest, referred to a preliminary agreement between the two contracting parties and was based upon the principle of reciprocal compensation. And I added that the Royal Italian Government had already communicated its demands concerning compensation to the Imperial and Royal Government.

After remarking that by an examination of the text of Article VII. he might have convinced himself of the exactitude of the comment which I had put forward at our last interview, to the effect that compensation was not to be sought in the Balkan region, Baron Burian remarked that the question of compensation had been carried by us on to extremely delicate grounds, thus giving rise to grave difficulties as we ourselves could not fail to realise. He wondered, therefore, why Italy should not have sought in other territories the compensation to which she was entitled.

I replied that the Royal Italian Government must take into account the national aspirations that were being manifested in Italy. Wherefore, as I had already made clear to him in our last interview, the question of compensation had been carried into that region towards which the eyes of popular sentiment were turned. Baron Burian then remarked that it would not be possible to determine the compensation to be made to Italy, because Austria-Hungary had not yet made any acquisitions or obtained any advantages, and that moreover it had no intention of obtaining any.

I added that to enable the Imperial and Royal Government to maintain its engagements with us it was necessary that we should come to a timely agreement concerning the manner in which these were to be maintained, because the course of events might bring us face to face with a *fait accompli*. In this connection I reminded him that in accordance with Article VII. the agreement should be in anticipation of and not contemporary with or consecutive to the facts which had occasioned it.

Seeing that Baron Burian continued to express himself to me as he had done at our previous interviews, in a vague and general manner, answering me by urging prejudices or objections on the score of principle, without entering into the merits of the question of compensation, I thought it advisable to draw his attention to the fact that it was necessary he should make known explicitly whether he admitted that the discussion should be carried into the region of the cession of territories belonging to the Monarchy, as it was not desirable that our conversations should be protracted without conducing to any practical and positive result before events should have matured.

Baron Burian repeated that the question of compensation such as had been framed by us was an extremely grave one, because it demanded that the Imperial and Royal Government should cut off a portion of the Monarchy. He was now considering it in his

own "*for intérieur*," and it was become the subject of his most serious reflections. He had not yet, however, found a way to determine it, and he was debating between the external and the still more serious internal difficulties by which the solution of the question was beset. It was to be examined not only by himself but also by the various responsible agents of Austria and of Hungary, since it interested both sections of the Monarchy. He added that he admitted the principle of compensation due to us by virtue of Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance. He also accepted in principle our demand for compensation and he was disposed to examine and discuss it, but he had not yet reached the point of being able to declare that he admitted our point of view to the effect that the question of compensation should be carried into the region of the cession of territories at present belonging to the Monarchy. It was desirable that the Royal Italian Government should convince itself of the magnitude of the sacrifice which this would entail for Austria-Hungary.

He remarked that our demand required rigid scrutiny on account of the grave consequences that might arise in Austria-Hungary from the point of view of internal and external policy, which were at all costs to be avoided. Therefore sufficient time in which to reflect and decide should be allowed to himself and the competent Austrian and Hungarian agents.

He certainly had no wish to increase the embarrassments of the Royal Italian Government but that Government should be able to understand those in which the Imperial and Royal Government also found itself, and it should do nothing on its own side to increase these. On this subject Baron Burian informed me that in his interviews with the Chancellor of the Empire and with Herr von Jagow and Herr Zimmermann, he had pointed out to them the grave difficulties evoked by the question of compensation in consequence of the delicate grounds on to which this had been carried by Italy, whence arose the necessity on the part of the Imperial and Royal Government seriously to consider it before coming to a decision. The German Government had entirely convinced itself of these difficulties and had undertaken to place them before the Royal Italian Government urging upon the latter that moderation and prudence which had been urged upon itself.

Baron Burian finally divulged to me that the German Government was determined to strive to the end that an agreement between Austria-Hungary and Italy might be reached and that he did not himself despair of seeing this attained. Germany and Austria-Hungary now formed one single person, and it was their desire that the alliance with Italy might continue in the future, this being also his own ardent wish.

But the two Governments, the Austrian and the Hungarian, seem at present to hesitate to accept our aspirations, as is shown by the language employed by Baron Burian himself, and this on account of the consequences to which the cession of territories belonging to Austria might give rise throughout the entire Monarchy.

AVARNA.

No. 17.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Berlin.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 2nd February, 1915.

AT the weekly reception yesterday Prince von Bülow asked me whether there was news of Baron Burian and of his conversations with the Duke of Avarna.

I read out to him the greater part of the Duke of Avarna's last telegram. I pointed out how extremely discouraging is all this to those who desire to come to an understanding; since although Baron Burian had joined the Government, if not to treat of this very question, at least with full knowledge of it, yet after visiting German Headquarters and discussing the said question with the Emperor William and with the German Government, he could to-day find nothing more definite to say to us than that he felt the need calmly to consider it further.

In answer to Prince von Bülow's questions, I repeated that we shall not present our demands until we know that Austria-Hungary accepts for discussion the question of the cession of territories at present belonging to the Monarchy, and that until that day I shall define nothing and exclude nothing, whether concerning the Trentino, Trieste, Istria, or any other territory; and I begged him to urge all concerned to expedite a decision, because the greater the delay, the greater would be the difficulties and the higher our demands.

SONNINO.

No. 18.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 4th February, 1915.

BARON MACCHIO having come to see me upon another matter, I introduced the subject of the interview between your Excellency and Baron Burian after his return from Berlin—an interview from which it appeared that all remained still uncertain and overclouded—concerning the question of compensation covered by Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance. And I seized the opportunity to repeat what I had said to Prince von Bülow (my telegram of the 2nd February), namely that to the reproach addressed to us of not defining our demands, we must answer that until it should become clear that the Austro-Hungarian Government would admit as a subject for discussion the eventual cession of territories now possessed by the Monarchy, it was not possible for us to define anything; but that we should do so as soon as that subject was admitted to discussion.

SONNINO.

No. 19.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 7th February, 1915.

AS is shown by your Excellency's telegram of the 28th January last, your Excellency had drawn Baron Burian's attention to the fact that it was advisable that the Italo-Austrian conversations on the subject of the compensation as provided by Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance should not be protracted without conducting to a practical and positive result before events should have matured.

I am therefore surprised that ten days should have elapsed without my having received either from Baron Macchio or from your Excellency any fresh advices on the subject.

I beg of you to see Baron Burian again, representing to him the urgency and the necessity of an early reply on the question of principle regarding the territories now possessed by Austria-Hungary, upon which we have requested that the discussions should turn.

SONNINO.

No. 20.

*The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.**Vienna, 9th February, 1915.**recd. 10th.*

(Telegram.)

IN reminding Baron Burian of what I had submitted in our interview of the 28th January last, I conveyed to him the substance of your Excellency's instructions. Baron Burian repeated all that he had told me in our last interview, namely that the question was one which concerned both the Governments of the Monarchy; in the first place the Austrian Government, which was directly interested, and in the second place the Hungarian Government. Therefore, to shelter his own responsibility he must come to an understanding with the said two Governments. He had already entered into an exchange of views on the subject with the Austrian Government. The President of the Council of Ministers, Count Sturgek, had made known to him that he was not favourably disposed towards our plans and that he did not consider justified the reasons we put forward for claiming the cession of territories belonging to Austria-Hungary; Count Sturgek had shown himself very uncompromising on the subject, but he had declared that he would submit it to the Council of Ministers, so that our demands might be examined and discussed. With regard to the Hungarian Government, Baron Burian informed me that during the sojourn of Count Tisza in Vienna, he had been unable through lack of time to do more than give him a simple outline of our demands, and Count Tisza had not looked upon these with any favour. He intends however to visit Budapest one of these days to see the Hungarian Government and to

discuss the question calmly and at length with Count Tisza, and he would subsequently advise me of the attitude of the latter towards it. I drew Baron Burian's attention to the fact that it was necessary to expedite a decision on the question of principle involved, because a further delay might give rise to fresh difficulties in view of the imminent reopening of Parliament. This delay was certainly not encouraging to those who desired to arrive at an understanding. It could not fail to occasion uncertainty as to the attitude of the Imperial Government, and to create, through the excitement and demonstrations to which it might lead, a situation of great difficulty for the Royal Italian Government, which would have been unable to hold out anything of a concrete and definite nature to appease the national aspirations. It was hence desirable that the Imperial and Royal Government should put an end to this uncertainty, affording us an answer frankly and at the earliest opportunity, so that the respective exchange of views might be embarked upon.

Baron Burian replied that he was working, and that he would continue actively to work, to the end that he might discuss and examine the question with both Governments; but he observed that an uncommonly persuasive force would be needed to induce him to enter into the point of view of the Royal Italian Government. He then remarked that to accept the discussion of the question as it had been presented by the Royal Italian Government was not as easy as it appeared, since it would, in his view, have implied on the part of the Imperial and Royal Government an undertaking towards us to listen to our proposals. And he concluded by saying that he was not yet in a position to listen to them, as conversations on the subject were still being continually held by the Austrian and the Hungarian Governments.

Baron Burian then said that he desired to carry our conversation to another subject. In recalling the reasons, logical and political, given in your Excellency's telegram of the 7th January, he remarked that he associated himself fully with all that your Excellency urged on political grounds, namely to create between Austria-Hungary and Italy a situation calculated to eliminate the continual friction and misunderstanding between the two nations, and to establish reciprocal relations upon a basis of sympathy and cordiality. And he added that he was a thorough partisan of the Triple Alliance. Referring then to Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance, he observed that in consequence of a fresh and careful examination of the text of the article itself and of various documents relating to our temporary occupation of Valona and the Dodecanesus, he had formed the conviction that those occupations imposed upon Italy the obligation of a preliminary agreement with Austria-Hungary based upon the principle of compensation.

I considered it advisable in this connection to remind Baron Burian of what I had already stated to him in our interview of the 17th January, namely that it did not appear to me that

Article VII. could be invoked in relation to the said occupations. The occupation of Valona had been occasioned by the general state of disorder prevailing in Albania, and had for object to safeguard the deliberations of the Conference of London, Italy being the only Power that was not implicated in the war. For the rest, the efforts of the Royal Italian Government were being applied at this moment to the preservation as far as possible of the Albanian *status quo*, pending the deliberations which would be held concerning Europe at the conclusion of the war.

With regard to the occupation of the Dodecanesus, it was well known how this had come about. If it had not yet been possible for the Royal Italian Government to abandon those islands, this was due to the fact that Turkey had not fulfilled the obligations imposed upon her by the Treaty of Lausanne, failing in them inasmuch as there were still in Libya numerous officers and soldiers belonging to the Ottoman army.

To my further observations that those islands were, unless memory failed me, in the Mediterranean, Baron Burian remarked that eight of them were in the Ægean Sea, and were therefore covered by Article VII. And he added that my objections did not diminish the grounds of his assertion, which was fully justified by the stipulations of Article VII., which gave the Imperial and Royal Government, in consequence of the aforesaid occupations, a clear and absolute right to a preliminary agreement based upon the principle of compensation. For the rest, Article VII. made no distinctions or restrictions of any kind between temporary and permanent occupation. Its text was explicit and left no doubt whatever that our occupations came under the provisions of it. He added that our occupation of Valona had been aggravated by the despatch thither of further troops and by the measures taken by our authorities which had established themselves there. Passing on to speak of the discussion with Count Berchtold regarding distinctions between temporary and momentary occupation, Baron Burian said that any occupation of Serbia effected by the Imperial and Royal Government in consequence of military operations by the Austro-Hungarian troops, gave us the right to discuss compensation in accordance with Article VII.

I replied to Baron Burian that by this declaration, of which I took note, he abandoned the proposition sustained by Count Berchtold, which drew a distinction between a temporary and a momentary occupation, and that he came thus to recognise as exact the interpretation placed by us upon Article VII. Baron Burian concluded by saying that he had thought it well to oppose to our demands for compensation the two above-mentioned counter-proposals for compensation, which certainly, however, did not aim at hindering the discussion of those presented by us. But the moment had seemed to him opportune to formulate them, with a view to removing all questions pending between us, and to clearing the ground of anything that might in future give rise to friction. He added that he deemed it advisable specially to insist upon

this point, but he assured me that his counter-proposals were not on that account to be interpreted as indications of ill-will or of an unfriendly spirit towards us.

As your Excellency will have gathered, Baron Burian was not yet able to-day to afford a complete answer to our demands, entrenching himself behind the difficulty of inducing the Austrian and the Hungarian Governments to consider these demands.

AVARNA.

No. 21.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 12th February, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 13th.

WITH reference to our interview of the 9th instant, Baron Burian has just sent me a memorandum of the grounds upon which the Austro-Hungarian counter-proposals are based.

Memorandum.

At the outset of the conversations which have been current for some time between Austria-Hungary and Italy on the subject of the compensation which Italy might claim on the basis of Article VII. of the Treaty of Alliance, in case of territorial or other advantages accruing to Austria-Hungary from her action against Serbia and Montenegro, the Italian Government had developed the idea that the political reasons in favour of such a discussion were the creation of good faith between the two States, so as to eliminate continual friction and to render possible the co-operation of the two nations towards objects of general policy. The Austro-Hungarian Government, sincerely actuated by the same propensities, recognises as fully the advantages of clearing the ground of any element that might in the future trammel the development of cordial relations between the two States. With this end in view it is considered necessary in the first place to bring about an agreement upon all questions regarding our reciprocal rights arising out of Article VII. of our Treaty of Alliance, and particularly upon two questions, one of which goes back several years, whilst the other is of recent date, both of them closely affecting our well-founded interests.

We are concerned with the question of the islands in the Ægean occupied by Italy, and with that of Italy's action in Albania. As for the first of these questions, it would be superfluous to recapitulate here the various phases, quite fresh in our minds, of the conversations which took place on the subject in 1911 and 1912 between Vienna and Rome, and which should be found recorded in the archives of the Consulta. It will suffice to state the following points :

(1) Notwithstanding the obvious danger introduced by the modification of the *status quo* in consequence of the occupation by Italy of the Dodecanesian islands, which would sooner or later be reflected in the Balkan Peninsula, Austria-Hungary did not formally oppose it, since it was not her wish to trammel in any way the operations of her ally.

(2) Nevertheless, the Austro-Hungarian Government called attention at the time to Article VII. of the Treaty of Alliance, and declared to the Italian Government on several occasions, on the 6th, 7th and 14th November, 1911, on the 13th, 15th and 20th April, 1912, on the 20th, 21st and 31st May, 1912, and on the 5th June, 1912, that the fact of these occupations, declared to be of a temporary character, brought into force Austria-Hungary's right to a preliminary agreement, based upon the principle of compensation, formulated in the said article, and that we reserved to ourselves the right of claiming its fulfilment at a given time. With regard to the duration, in any case irrelevant, of these occupations which should constitute a sound title to compensation, Italy assured the Austro-Hungarian Government several times, and in the most categorical manner, that these occupations were no more than transient, and that they would come to an end after the cessation of hostilities between Italy and Turkey. The question was even discussed of a written declaration on the subject which the Italian Government should deliver to the Austro-Hungarian Government, without, however, its having been possible to agree to the terms of this document. Nevertheless the Austro-Hungarian Government desires to reproduce here the following text of that declaration as it was proposed by the Italian Government: "It is understood that in the mind of the Italian Government the occupation so far effected, or which might be effected hereafter, in the islands of the Ægean Sea, is of a provisional character, and that the said islands will be restored to Turkey after the cessation of hostilities between Italy and Turkey, and, consequently, after the evacuation of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica by the Ottoman troops and officers, and as soon as the conditions indicated to the Great Powers in the Italian note of the 15th March, 1912, shall have been realised. It is equally understood that the present declaration which arises out of the provisions of Article VII. of the Treaty of Alliance shall be considered strictly secret and confidential by the Austro-Hungarian Government and also by the Italian Government, since otherwise it would not achieve the common object of the two Powers, which is to hasten and facilitate peace." It results from this declaration, on the one hand, that the conditions to which Italy had subordinated the evacuation of the Dodecanesus at present no longer obtain, and also that although nearly three years have elapsed since then, Italy has not yet restored these islands to Turkey. On the other hand, this declaration proves that Italy recognised the correlation existing between these occupations and Article VII. of the Treaty of Alliance. It seems, therefore, evident that if the Government desires to discuss at once the compensation to which the article in question would entitle it in the case of a future and, as it happens, uncertain Austro-Hungarian occupation, the Austro-Hungarian Government may in its turn demand, and with still greater reason, a discussion of the compensation to which it is already entitled in consequence of the prolonged occupation of the Dodecanesus on the part of Italy.

Passing on to the question of Italy's action in Albania, the Austro-Hungarian Government desires to state that it has received on this subject only two communications from the Italian Government. On the 23rd October last the Duke of Avarna informed Count Berchtold that, in view of the penury manifested among the refugees in Valona and of the anarchy prevailing there, Italy saw herself induced to provide, by the dispatch of a small sanitary police mission, for "certain necessary police operations and humanitarian measures in favour of the refugees, without giving these operations the character of a military expedition amounting to an occupation, in the proper sense of the term, of the city of Valona."

The Duke of Avarna was desired to add that, in conformity with the declarations which she had made at the commencement of the present war, Italy would continue to remain faithful to the agreement in force between herself and Austria-Hungary concerning Albania and the Epirus, and to maintain the decisions of the Conference of London particularly in what concerned the neutrality and the frontiers of Albania.

The Austro-Hungarian Government made a note of this communication. On the 26th December last the Duke of Avarna informed Count Berchtold that, to put an end to the local anarchy, the Italian Government found it necessary to disembark a detachment of sailors at Valona. It would be a matter of purely provisional measures which would not extend beyond the city of Valona. The declarations quoted above were renewed on this occasion. Count Berchtold confined himself to making a note of this communication. Now, since then the action of Italy in Albania has been gradually changed and, above all, intensified. The disembarkation of a detachment of Italian sailors at Valona was followed by the dispatch of Italian infantry and artillery and of a considerable quantity of war material. The city of Valona, as well as Kanina and Svernez, have been occupied in a military sense.

The number of Italian warships in Albanian waters has constantly increased. When the invasion of Durazzo by the enemies of Essad Pasha was feared, one of these ships fired upon the besiegers, a thing which last year, and in very much graver circumstances, the Italian Government had considered its duty to refuse to do in conjunction with the Austro-Hungarian Government. Apart from this military action, Italy has also taken possession of the civil administration of Valona, where the prefecture, the financial administration, the police and the municipality are controlled by agents of the Italian Government, some of whom are invested with the title of Royal Commissioners. An analogous measure has just been applied to the Custom House at Valona. Another provision of the Italian Government requires that all persons repairing to Valona shall be supplied with a passport bearing the Italian *visé*. Although in our view the aggregate of these measures is not at all in accordance with the terms and meaning of the reiterated Italian declarations, the Austro-Hungarian Government abstains

for the moment from all protest, but it finds itself obliged to state that the action of Italy comes unquestionably under the definition of a temporary occupation, according to our interpretation of Article VII., and, like the occupation of the Dodecanesus, gives us at once the right to compensation.

The case of the Italian occupation of Valona ceasing to be entirely transient has not yet arisen, but it follows naturally that that alternative, since it is incompatible with the Italo-Austro-Hungarian agreement concerning Albania, and since it produces a modification of the Adriatic equilibrium so often cited by the Italian Government, would give Austria-Hungary also an additional right to adequate compensation.

To sum up the foregoing, the Austro-Hungarian Government is of the opinion that the conversations so happily embarked upon between Italy and Austria-Hungary on the subject of compensation might be pursued still more advantageously if they were to take into consideration also the compensation to be accorded Austria-Hungary for the Italian occupation of the Dodecanesus and for the Italian occupation, though it be only temporary, of Valona.

AVARNA.

No. 22.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.
(Telegram.)

Rome, February 12th, 1915.

WITH regard to the temporary occupations of the Dodecanesus and Valona, which according to Baron Burian imposed upon Italy the obligation of a preliminary agreement with Austria-Hungary based upon the principle of compensation, I must point out the following:

(1) *Dodecanesian Islands*.—Your excellency was informed by telegram on the 20th May, 1912, that the islands already occupied by the Italian troops were the following: Astylalaea, Rhodes, Casos, Carpathos and Chalce; and that those to be occupied immediately were Syme, Piscope, Nisyros, Calymna, Leros, Lypsos and Patmos.

By our telegram of the 21st May, 1912, Your Excellency was informed that we were proceeding immediately to the occupation of Cos.

By your telegram of the 23rd May, your Excellency informed us that you had made the respective communication to Berchtold. Count Berchtold replied, "that such a decision was opposed not only to the declarations previously made to us but also to the engagements into which we had entered by virtue of Article VII. of the Triple Alliance," and that "he would have the right to demand, on the basis of the said article, compensation for these occupations. In view, however, of the considerations submitted to him, and to show his goodwill and his sincere desire to refrain as far as possible at the moment from placing obstacles in the way of our freedom of action, Count Berchtold would not raise any opposition to the aforesaid occupations and *would not avail*

himself on this occasion of the due right to compensation. He must, however, formally declare that if he were to proceed to the ulterior occupation of islands in the Ægean it would not be possible for him to consent, on account of the grave consequences which might result, and in leaving upon us the full responsibility of such eventual occupation, he must reserve himself the right to compensation, of which he might avail himself should the occasion arise."

It results from the foregoing that Count Berchtold declared to Your Excellency that he waived the right to avail himself of the clause relating to compensation so far as Rhodes and the Dodecanesus were concerned. Such a declaration obviates the necessity of ascertaining if and how many of the islands occupied by Italy are in the Mediterranean or the Ægean, having regard to Article VII. which concerns the Ægean only.

Further, however, in view precisely of Austria's opposition, and in consequence of the aforesaid declaration that "ulterior occupation" would render operative the clause relating to compensation, the Royal Italian Government took the grave resolve to abstain from the occupation of Chios and Mitylene, notwithstanding that from news received and from facts ascertained it was clear that it was precisely the occupation of Chios and Mitylene that would have stricken our enemy in a manner calculated to weaken his resistance and to constrain him to enter into peace negotiations to set an end to the war.

Italy, therefore, respected the obligations imposed by Article VII. with the result of grave detriment to herself by consequent protraction of the war.

The occupation of Rhodes and the Dodecanesus was prolonged for reasons of two kinds :

(a) The evacuation of the islands is subject to the fulfilment by Turkey of the terms of the treaty of Lausanne, to the obligations of which Turkey has not so far submitted. Nor has Turkey yet submitted to the obligation, which she herself recognised, of indemnifying Italy by concessions in Asia Minor, for the expenditure borne in consequence of the protraction of Italian military occupation of islands.

(b) By the occupation of the islands, Italy rendered a signal service to Turkey inasmuch as those islands would inevitably have been conquered by Greece, as were Chios, Mitylene and other islands now in possession of Greece. And it follows that Turkey was extremely eager that the Italian occupation should continue, nor did she ever request us to evacuate the islands, clearly perceiving that in the prevailing uncertain political situation and in view of the precariousness of Græco-Turkish relations, grave indeed would be the danger incurred by the islands if they were restored to Turkey while militarily incapable of defending them. Therefore the occupation of the islands during the Balkan war and during the present European conflict, in which Turkey is participating, constituted and constitutes a service rendered by Italy to the ally of Austria-Hungary.

(2) *Occupation of Valona.*—The Italian occupation of Valona arises out of and is based upon the actual situation in which the Powers that were signatories of the Treaty of London found themselves as a result of the European war. By that treaty Albania was created and her frontiers were defined in relation to the contiguous Balkan States.

The Italian Government has maintained ever since the commencement of the present war that the treaty of London concerning Albania should continue valid and obligatory.

Italy alone, as a neutral Power, was in a position to undertake to safeguard the Treaty of London, and this explains and justifies the fact that from no quarter were any objections raised when we provisionally occupied Sasena and Valona with the object of preserving those important Albanian localities from events which would have produced grave internal consequences. It is, in fact, well-known that Valona was imminently threatened by disorders in consequence of the conflicting ambitions of the Geghs and Epirotes. The Epirotes were disowned by the Government of Athens, but there can be no illusions on the score of the consequences which would have followed an Epirote occupation of Valona.

If so far as Valona was concerned it was indispensable to proceed to a provisional military occupation, so far as the rest of Albania was concerned diplomatic measures proved sufficient to curb the ambitions of the neighbouring Balkan States. The urgent representations made to the Governments of Belgrade, of Athens and of Cettinje have had the happy effect of restraining those Governments so far from any incursions or military operations. It is therefore thanks to the firm attitude of the Italian Government that Albania, as established by the conference of London, suffered no radical curtailment.

After answering thus the "counter-proposals" formulated by Baron Burian, which, as I have shown have no place in the present negotiations, I submit what follows:

More than two months have elapsed since we put the question concerning Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance before the Austro-Hungarian Government, inviting a friendly discussion of the subject of the compensation to be accorded to Italy for the disturbance provoked by that Government in the Balkan equilibrium.

Although we have never received a precise refusal to treat, weeks and months are elapsing and we have not yet succeeded in obtaining a reply even on the preliminary subject of the principle involved, namely, as to whether the Imperial and Royal Government would be disposed to accept discussion on the ground of the cession of territories at present possessed by Austria-Hungary.

On the contrary, whilst on the one hand fresh questions and subjects for debate are being propounded, with the evident object of evading all discussion of the question submitted by us and of prolonging matters, on the other hand fresh military expeditions into the Balkans are meanwhile being prepared.

In view of this persistently dilatory attitude towards us, it is no longer possible to entertain illusions regarding the practical issue of the negotiations. Hence, the Royal Italian Government finds itself constrained, in order that it may preserve its own dignity, to withdraw its every proposal or initiation of discussion, and to confine itself strictly to the provisions of Article VII., declaring that it considers directly opposed to the article itself any military action entered into from to-day by Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, whether against Serbia, Montenegro or another, unless there should be a previous agreement as that article demands.

It is not necessary for me to observe that should the Austro-Hungarian Government display in the event a disregard of this declaration and of the provisions of Article VII., such a course might lead to grave consequences, the responsibility for which is forthwith disclaimed by the Royal Italian Government.

On this subject it is as well to recall the intimations made to Italy on several occasions during the Libyan war by the Austro-Hungarian Government.

Count Aehrenthal declared to your Excellency on the 5th November, 1911, that "action by us upon the Ottoman coast of Turkey in Europe, or upon the islands of the Ægean Sea, could not be permitted either by Austria-Hungary or by Germany, because contrary to the Treaty of Alliance." (Your Excellency's telegram of the 5th November, 1911.)

And on the 7th November of the same year your Excellency telegraphed: "Aehrenthal considers bombardment of ports of Turkey in Europe such as Salonica, Cavalla, etc., as contrary to Article VII."

In 1912 our navy, being at the entrance of the Dardanelles, and having been bombarded by the forts of Kum Kale, replied with damage to the forts. Count Berchtold complained of the event, adding that "if the Government desired to regain its liberty of action, the Imperial and Royal Government *could do the same*." Therefore he would be unable to admit that in the future we should undertake similar operations or indeed any operations that were opposed to the point of view manifested in the previous interviews. Should any similar operation be undertaken by us "*it might lead to grave consequences*."

Your Excellency will kindly convey the foregoing to that Government.

SONNINO.

No. 23.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Telegram.)

Vienna, 14th February, 1915.

I CONVEYED to Baron Burian the matter of your Excellency's instructions.

Baron Burian said that he was entirely in ignorance that Count Berchtold could have renounced his right to avail himself of the

clause of compensation with regard to our occupations of Rhodes and the Dodecanesus. When I then showed him, in confirmation of the statement contained in your Excellency's telegram, the letter addressed to me by Count Berchtold of the 22nd May, 1912, in which he expressed himself in the very terms which I textually reproduced, Baron Burian remarked that such a renunciation would be not only contrary to the opinion held by the Imperial and Royal Ministry upon Article VII., but also to the provisions of the article itself, and that no document was in existence at the Ballplatz in which it was stated that the right to compensation had been waived. He added that in his opinion the expression used by Count Berchtold, "that he would not avail himself on this occasion of the due right to compensation" was to be interpreted as meaning that he did not intend to avail himself of the right to compensation at the time when the occupation of the islands had taken place or at the time when he discussed the matter with me, but that he retained the power of availing himself of it in proper season. I disputed this interpretation, remarking that if that had been what Count Berchtold had meant he could not have failed to add that he retained the power to avail himself of the right to compensation at another time, whilst the expression used instead by Count Berchtold could have no other meaning but that which we placed upon it, as was clearly shown by the next sentence in which, with reference to ulterior occupation by us on islands in the Ægean Sea, he did reserve the right to compensation so that he might eventually avail himself of it.

Coming then to speak of the decision taken by the Royal and Imperial Government to withdraw its every proposal or initiation of discussion and to confine itself strictly to the provisions of Article VII., Baron Burian remarked that the first question of principle, regarding which your Excellency complained of not having yet received a reply, re-opened the whole matter. He had consented to enter into a discussion with the Royal Italian Government so as to arrive at an agreement, being actuated therein by the best intentions. And he proposed to go to Budapest on the day after to-morrow to discuss the matter with Count Tisza. The Royal Italian Government should, however, recognise that it had placed the matter upon very thorny grounds, and it certainly could not demand that the Imperial and Royal Government should proceed to an immediate discussion of a question affecting the interests of the Monarchy.

Baron Burian informed me that he took note of the communication I made to him in your Excellency's name. But just as the Imperial and Royal Government never desired to depart from the provisions of Article VII., so it would not fail, in the eventual continuation of the campaign against Serbia, to bear in mind the stipulations of that article.

I considered it proper to point out to Baron Burian that the article itself imposed upon the Imperial and Royal Government

the obligation, before initiating any military operations, of proceeding to an agreement that should be preliminary to and not contemporary with or consecutive to those operations.

AVARNA.

No. 24.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.
(Telegram.) *Rome, 17th February, 1915.*

FROM the answer given by Baron Burian to the communication your Excellency made to him concerning the mistrust of any Austro-Hungarian military action in the Balkans without a previous agreement with the Royal Italian Government, it is evident that there is the intention of permitting such military action to precede the discussion of the indemnities which are the subject of Article VII. I approve of your Excellency's reply. And I beg you to avail yourself of the very first opportunity clearly to repeat to Baron Burian, so as to avoid regrettable and dangerous misapprehensions, that the clear interpretation of Article VII. imposes that the agreement should be previous to the action, unless the other party consents to a different procedure. In the present circumstances the Royal Italian Government cannot give any such consent; hence the communication made by us to the Imperial and Royal Government amounts precisely to a veto, opposed by us to any military action of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans until the agreement demanded by Article VII. concerning compensation should have been reached. It is necessary to make it quite clear that any other proceeding on the part of that Government could not now be interpreted by us as other than an open violation of the terms of the Treaty and a manifestation of that Government's intention to resume its liberty of action, in which case we should account ourselves fully justified also in resuming our own full liberty of action so as to safeguard our interests.

SONNINO.

No. 25.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Berlin.
(Telegram.) *Rome, 18th February, 1915.*

IN an interview on the day before yesterday with Prince von Bülow I told him of the communications made by the Duke of Avarna to Baron Burian regarding the withdrawal on our part of all discussions of the compensation with which Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance is concerned and of our mistrust of any Austro-Hungarian action in the Balkans whenever there was no previous agreement with ourselves. The Prince, after taking a note of what I told him, asked me in confidence whether, speaking between ourselves and not officially, I myself believed that in the suppositious event of Austria's persisting to refuse any concessions concerning the Trentino, there were no other territories, either in Albania or elsewhere, that might be discussed

in connection with the advantages to be ensured to Italy so as to avoid the great calamity of a war between our countries.

I answered that I had always spoken to him in the fullest sincerity, and that I was quite ready to express, apart from all official character, my own intimate and profound conviction: I did not now wish to enter into discussions regarding the extent of the concessions that might suffice to ensure our neutrality by satisfying in some measure our national aspirations; that on this score there might be greater or less doubt or difference of opinion; but that outside of this basis of concessions no negotiations were possible. It was not a question of the lust of conquest or of megalomaniac ambitions; but of the appreciation of the popular mind and the national sentiment.

The Monarchy of Savoy, as I had previously pointed out to him, find its strongest roots in the personification of the national ideals, and these roots were so strong as to have been able to hold firmly and to prevail against the prolonged contentions with the Papacy and the spread of socialism in its most revolutionary period.

Therefore, apart from concessions calculated to satisfy, at least in some degree, the national sentiment, there is no basis of discussion.

That all this did not depend upon the will or caprice of this or that Ministry; the tide of public opinion would overwhelm any other question, would sweep away any other force, would overthrow all obstacles; and no subtle arguings, or gloomy presages or exaggeration of dangers would avail to restrain it.

At Vienna they either could not or would not convince themselves of this situation, and they accounted it mere *bluff* on our part, or else just the fantastic dreams of Prince von Bülow.

In these circumstances the responsibility weighing upon men who direct the Government was enormous. I was conscious of having done everything possible on the one hand to curb impatience and moderate aspirations, and on the other to represent the situation in its crude reality both to Vienna and Berlin.

SONNINO.

No. 26.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Berlin.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 21st February, 1915.

I SAW Prince von Bülow yesterday.

Since he expressed a doubt whether Baron Burian might not have gathered from the communications made to him in the name of the Royal Italian Government by the Duke of Avarna, a very different impression from that which he himself (von Bülow) had gathered from all that I had told him on the subject, I repeated to him the substance of the communications made to Vienna, formulating them in a textual résumé, as follows:

“The Government has declared throughout that it could not admit the utility of any discussion concerning the compensation which forms the subject of Article VII., unless this were to relate

to the cession of territories at present in the possession of Austria-Hungary; because such discussions, since they could not in any way satisfy Italian national sentiment, could not lead to any agreement.

“Until now the two Governments have discussed rather vaguely Balkan events which have already taken place or which may lie in the future.

“By confining itself to Article VII., according to the last communication made by the Duke of Avarna to Baron Burian, and by withdrawing all previous proposals of discussion, the Italian Government desired clearly to establish the following: the Italian Government does not consent in the future to any military action by Austria-Hungary in the Balkans unless an agreement, as demanded by Article VII., should have been previously reached on the subject of compensation, an agreement which it would be idle to hope to reach otherwise than upon the basis of the cession of territories at present in the possession of Austria-Hungary. If the Austro-Hungarian Government were not in the subsequent events to take into account this declaration of the Italian Government, the latter would perceive in this the proof that Austria-Hungary had resumed its liberty of action with regard to the provisions of the Treaty, and this would justify the Italian Government in resuming its liberty of action also.”

SONNINO.

No. 27.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 22nd February, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 23rd.

I HAVE communicated to Baron Burian what your Excellency telegraphed me, and in adhering scrupulously to your Excellency's instructions I endeavoured to make clear to him the various points involved. Baron Burian told me that he would reply in the first place to the interpretation placed by your Excellency upon Article VII., according to which the agreement concerning the eventual indemnities was to be concluded, and not merely initiated, before the inception of any military operations of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. In this connection he remarked that the conclusion of the preliminary agreement would have depended upon us, that we might have prolonged the discussion and that in the meanwhile Austria-Hungary would have been exposed to every attack on the part of Serbia without being able to reply. Further, the compensation to be accorded to Italy should be equivalent to the advantages which might accrue to Austria-Hungary.

But before settling the compensation it was desirable to establish and to proportion the advantages.

These two causes showed, in his opinion, the impossibility of reaching an agreement antecedently to Austria's military operations in the Balkans. I pointed out to Baron Burian that the term “previous agreement” showed in itself that this was to be concluded, and not merely initiated, before the inception of those

operations. In fact, the word "agreement" meant definite consent upon a given point, and this meaning acquired greater force from the preceding word, which signified that the thing was to be decided and determined before proceeding further. If that were not the meaning to be attributed to the aforesaid expression by the negotiators of the Treaty, then the conditions to which Article VII. subordinated every modification of the *status quo* would be of no effect.

Further, if the preliminary agreement were not to be concluded, what guarantee would there be for the other contracting party that the agreement itself once it were initiated would be concluded during military operations? Differences of opinion might render impossible its conclusion, in which case the condition provided by Article VII. would not have been fulfilled, and the other contracting party would have incurred the risk of remaining uncompensated. Baron Burian replied that whilst finding my observations reasonable, he, nevertheless, could not admit them or consider them to be in accordance with the spirit or the letter of the Treaty, because by such reasonings the liberty of action of one of the contracting parties might be trammelled, a state of things which certainly could not agree with the intentions of the negotiators of the Treaty. Nor yet could he admit that the non-conclusion of the agreement before any military operations should have taken place constituted a negation of guarantees for the other contracting party. The word of the contracting party which had engaged itself to enter into negotiations regarding the preliminary agreement seemed to him a sufficient guarantee. Baron Burian added that in his view Article VII. did not permit of a formal and absolute veto of any military operations by Austria in the Balkans, but that it established the need for and the right to compensation for the advantages which might accrue therefrom.

After referring to the intimations addressed to us by the Imperial and Royal Government on various occasions during the Italo-Turkish war, I observed that it was beyond doubt that the Royal Italian Government was entitled to pronounce this veto in the absence of an agreement regarding the compensation as provided by Article VII., which agreement should moreover be carried to a conclusion, and not merely initiated, before the inception of military operations. And in reminding him of what I had already said, namely that any other procedure on the part of the Imperial and Royal Government might be interpreted by us as an open violation of the terms of the Treaty, I conveyed to him the actual substance of your Excellency's instructions. To this Baron Burian replied that in his view the agreement should certainly be initiated before the inception of military operations, but that it should be elaborated afterwards in accordance with the progress of those operations. He recognised, however, that it was possible to outline the general basis of the preliminary agreement, determining the subject of the compensation which the Royal Italian Government desired to obtain. And he declared to me that it was not at all his intention to avoid the obligations imposed by Article VII., to which he desired to

submit with all goodwill. But he could not agree to the interpretation, placed by your Excellency upon that article, whereby the preliminary agreement must be determined in all its particulars before any military operation is undertaken by Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, because this might place the Imperial and Royal Government in an impossible position. And he repeated that the protraction of the conversations, even irrespectively of the wishes of the Royal Italian Government, would place Austria at the mercy of Serbia, since she would be unable to defend herself from Serbian attacks for as long as the negotiations lasted.

Baron Burian then turned to the question of the uselessness of opening a discussion of the eventual compensation unless it concerned the cession of territories now possessed by Austria-Hungary. And he told me that if the Imperial and Royal Government were in a position to enter into negotiations for a preliminary agreement with Italy before undertaking any military operations in Serbia, he would not fail to announce it opportunely to the Royal Italian Government so as to set on foot the conversations regarding that agreement; but he could not at present bind himself concerning the basis of the compensation to which your Excellency had alluded. In insisting that he should pronounce upon this point I repeated all that I had already said to him, namely that if the Imperial Government were to show hereafter in the events that it did not take our declarations seriously into account, the Royal Italian Government would perceive in that a violation of the Treaty of Alliance, and the consequences might be extremely grave. Baron Burian answered me that the question of the basis of the compensation had not at present any character of actuality. He remarked further that if your Excellency had the right to interpret the Treaty, he also had a similar right, and that a transient difference of opinion or of interpretation could not be considered as a violation of the Treaty itself.

Notwithstanding my repeated and urgent insistence, Baron Burian persisted in his refusal to agree to your Excellency's point of view regarding the interpretation of Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance and the basis of the compensation to which we are entitled.

On this last point it is idle to entertain illusions. The Imperial and Royal Government will never, under present conditions, consent to the cession of territories belonging to the Monarchy.

AVARNA.

No. 28.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 25th February, 1915.

I APPROVE the answers given by your Excellency to Baron Burian.

The text of Article VII. speaks of a preliminary agreement (*accord préalable*) respecting the compensation, and not of a

discussion regarding an agreement to be concluded later, when one of the parties should have completed its operations in the Balkans and should already have obtained the advantages sought, when it would be at liberty to cavil indefinitely about the compensation to be accorded to the other contracting party.

The word "*préalable*" shows that it is exacted by Article VII. that, unless otherwise agreed by the parties, the agreement, by which is meant the concurrence of the parties determining the quality and quantity of the indemnity, should be concluded prior to any action. There is nothing to forbid, in given circumstances, when both sides consent and the facts of the case render it advisable, that the agreement may even be formulated in a conditional manner, proportioning the compensation to the future results that may actually be yielded by the military operations to be undertaken; but Article VII. further admits that compensation may also be exacted upon the simple fact of the initiation of action in the Balkans.

It would be entirely opposed to the spirit, as well as to the letter of Article VII., and contrary to all the interpretations put upon it in 1911 and 1912 by Austria-Hungary during the Libyan war, to admit, as Baron Burian would now desire, that the article itself provides that before determining the compensation it is necessary to be able to make a valuation of the advantages actually yielded by given action in the Balkans of one of the contracting parties. Otherwise one of the parties might undertake and carry through a war in the Balkans before the other party should so much as have a claim to know with certainty whether it was entitled in theory to any compensation, whilst in practice it might never, even after the conclusion of operations, receive any compensation at all.

In these circumstances the Royal Italian Government, with a view to eliminating future protraction of the discussion of the agreement, such as might trammel in too grave a manner the military action of Austria-Hungary, has clearly declared as from now, without awaiting the effectuation of any such new undertaking of Austria-Hungary's in the Balkans, that any future proposal to discuss compensation not concerned with the cession of territories now actually possessed by Austria-Hungary, could lead to no practical result, since it would thus be impossible ever to reach that agreement which should precede the intended action.

Upon the grounds indicated by us, however, such an agreement between the two States might presumably be reached; and if the Austro-Hungarian Government were to admit at once the principle of basing eventual discussions upon these grounds, such a course must render the negotiations easier and more fruitful, and lead to the agreement itself.

SONNINO.

No. 29.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Berlin.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 25th February, 1915.

IN your telegram of the 21st instant your Excellency communicates that the Chancellor Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg had declared to you that "from what he had been told by Baron Burian, he considered himself authorised to state that the Austro-Hungarian Government was also of opinion that the agreement in question should be completed before the military operations should have begun."

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna transmits me a series of arguments by Baron Burian which aim at showing that the Austro-Hungarian Government is not at all of this opinion, "being unable to admit the interpretation of Article VII. according to which the preliminary agreement must be determined in all its particulars before any military operation is undertaken by Austria-Hungary in the Balkans."

We insist upon our interpretation as the only one possible, and as being in accordance with that which Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg stated was also admitted by Austria-Hungary; but it seems to me desirable that your Excellency should draw that Government's attention to the above-mentioned contradiction.

SONNINO.

No. 30.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Rome, 24th February, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 25th.

I THINK it well to correct a slight error which occurred in my last telegram. I said therein that Baron Burian refused to admit your Excellency's point of view regarding the interpretation of Article VII. of the Treaty of Triple Alliance and regarding the basis of the compensation to which we are entitled. Although it is correct that Baron Burian refused to admit the first of these points of view it is not strictly correct to say the same of the second one, since his reply was not in the negative, but merely evasive.

AVARNA.

No. 31.

The Italian Ambassador at Berlin to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Berlin, 26th February, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 27th.

OUR interpretation on the subject of the necessity that the preliminary agreement covered by Article VII. should be carried to a conclusion and not merely initiated, had been admitted by the Chancellor not merely implicitly, but explicitly and repeatedly. For, to the inquiry which on two occasions he addressed to me as to

whether the statement he had made to me of the communication presented by the Duke of Avarna to Baron Burian was exactly in conformity with the fact, I had replied that the only point to be cleared up was precisely the one above mentioned, and he had answered that he agreed with our interpretation and added that he accounted himself authorised to assert that it was also the opinion of the Austro-Hungarian Government that the agreement should be accomplished (*erfolgt*) and completed (*volkommen*) before the military operations were begun. And Herr von Jagow, to whom I subsequently submitted this, confirmed to me the words of the Chancellor.

Therefore in speaking to him this morning I manifested my surprise at the declarations made by Baron Burian to the Duke of Avarna in a sense entirely opposed to these assurances. Herr von Jagow, who also could not understand how this could have happened, supposed that in the interview between Baron Burian and the Chancellor there might have been some misunderstanding, to clear up which he would telegraph at once to Herr von Tschirseky. The better to explain to him the ideas of the Royal Italian Government I read to him the telegram addressed by your Excellency to the Duke of Avarna. He made a note of the essential points therein and told me that he would submit them to a careful examination.

BOLLATI.

No. 32.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 26th February, 1915.

recd. 27th.

(Telegram.)

I HAVE communicated to Baron Burian the various considerations put forward by your Excellency, and in conveying to him the substance of your instructions, I expressed the trust that he would persuade himself of the reasonableness of those considerations. Baron Burian told me that the arguments adduced by your Excellency, to show that the discussion of an agreement to be reached subsequently when one of the parties should have completed its operations in the Balkans and obtained the advantages sought, might be indefinitely protracted on the subject of the compensation to be accorded to the other contracting party, might similarly be adduced even if the agreement were to be concluded before any military operations were undertaken. And he recalled in this connection what he had pointed out in our interview of the 22nd instant. In his view, if the negotiations regarding the agreement were begun in due season, before the inception of any military operations, it would be possible, granted the goodwill of both parties, to establish quickly the bases of the actual negotiations. But in settling the details of the agreement it might happen that delays might ensue independently of the will of either party. And there would certainly be no justification in that for suspending the military operations until the agreement

should be concluded. If, therefore, your Excellency's interpretation of Article VII. were to be admitted, Austria-Hungary would be exposed to detriment in her military operations in Serbia with which she was at war and against which she must continue to combat. In fact, if Austria-Hungary did not attack Serbia but were attacked by Serbia, the Imperial and Royal Government would find itself in an impossible position, because it would not be able to defend itself. He considered it advisable to submit to me these considerations in support of his proposition that the agreement was to be initiated but not carried to a conclusion before any military operations were undertaken.

Baron Burian further pointed out that without following the rigid interpretation given by your Excellency to Article VII., it was not yet possible to adopt the idea to which your Excellency alluded, and he accepted the principle, namely that in given circumstances, when both sides consent and the facts of the case render it advisable, the agreement may be even formulated in a conditional manner proportioning the compensation to the results which may in effect accrue from a military action to be undertaken. And he added that the special circumstances for Austria-Hungary lay in the fact which he had already pointed out that she was at war with Serbia and exposed to the attacks of this Power from which she would be unable to defend herself in the event of her being compelled to conform to the interpretation given by your Excellency to Article VII., a fact which would have placed Austria-Hungary in the impossible situation aforesaid. And your Excellency would find it impossible to do other than agree with him in this. Proceeding, Baron Burian remarked that if both parties were actuated by goodwill, a circumstance not to be doubted, it would be possible thus, conditionally to establish the lesser details of the agreement in proportion to the future or possible result of the action to be undertaken. It was impossible to define compensation on the eve of military operations the advantages accruing from which were not to be foreseen. Moreover, the adoption of your Excellency's idea would avoid all delays, and it would also avoid that either Austria-Hungary or Italy should be baulked; therefore he could not but associate himself with that idea because it would lessen the difficulties to be overcome in arriving at an agreement in the event of its being necessary to adhere to your Excellency's aforesaid interpretation. In declaring to me, therefore, that he was inclined to accept the idea itself and to put it into practice, he desired me to beg your Excellency to make known to him your views on the subject.

Baron Burian then informed me that he persisted in the point of view which he had manifested in the interview of the 22nd inst., namely, that before settling the compensation it is necessary to be able to estimate the advantages accruing in effect from given action in the Balkans on the part of one of the contracting parties. I indicated to Baron Burian that this point of view, as I had already stated, was opposed not only to the spirit and to the letter of

Article VII., but further to the interpretation given to it by Austria-Hungary in 1912 and 1913.

Referring to what he had said to me in the above mentioned interview, Baron Burian stated that the idea expressed by your Excellency, which he thought it would be in the interests of both Governments to adopt if it were practicable, might eliminate the divergencies of opinion existing between your Excellency and himself in connection with that argument. Replying then to my remarks that any proposal to discuss compensation that did not concern the cession of territories at present possessed by Austria-Hungary would never lead to that agreement which should precede the intended action, Baron Burian replied that he must refer me on the subject to what he had already said in our interview of the 22nd inst., namely, that he could not at present bind himself regarding the basis of the compensation, such a question possessing at the moment no character of actuality.

Having then repeated to him the declaration contained in the last part of your Excellency's telegram, Baron Burian recalled what he had said to me in the interview of the 22nd, that is to say that a transient difference of opinion or of interpretation could not be looked upon as a violation of the Treaty.

AVARNA

No. 33.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 27th February, 1915.

FOR the reasons several times expressed in my telegrams, it is not possible in the present case to anticipate a discussion on the agreement to be concluded antecedently to any military action whatever by Austria-Hungary against Serbia and Montenegro, even though it were question of an agreement proportioning the compensation, in all or in part, to the advantages accruing in effect from the action itself, because the Royal Italian Government, for the reasons repeatedly advanced, cannot accept any discussion that does not concern the cession of territories already now in the possession of Austria-Hungary; and on this point it has not succeeded during three months in obtaining a reply even on the question of principle, namely, whether the Imperial and Royal Government will accept the discussion upon such grounds; so much is this the case, that to preserve its own dignity the Royal Italian Government has been constrained to withdraw all its proposals of such discussion. The special circumstance to which Baron Burian appeals, that in the case of Austria-Hungary's being already at war with Serbia the eventual agreement should be framed in a conditional and proportional manner, does not seem to me to be invocable in the present case, since that war was undertaken by Austria-Hungary without any previous concert with Italy, but, on the contrary, against all the advice proffered by her and in opposition to the majority of Italy's political

interests. At most that circumstance might be invoked in connection with only one part of the compensation to be agreed, namely, the proportional one, but not in connection with all compensation, since the fact itself of the inception of fresh military operations in the Balkans, would constitute in our eyes a sufficient reason for claiming a minimum of territorial compensation independently of the results to be obtained. All this, however, remains subordinate to the initial question of principle, that is to say of the grounds upon which all discussion of compensation should take place. Until Austria-Hungary can make clearly known her views on this question of principle, which concerns the nature of the eventual compensation, it is quite useless to initiate or prolong any discussion concerned with the amount of the compensation itself or with proportioning it, in all or in part, to the eventual results of the military operations, because such a discussion could never lead to any useful issue.

SONNINO.

No 34.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Telegram.)

Vienna, 3rd March, 1915.

recd. 3rd.

I HAVE conveyed to Baron Burian the substance of the instructions imparted to me by your Excellency's telegram.

Baron Burian expressed to me his regret at being unable to share your Excellency's opinion that the special circumstance to which he had appealed, namely that Austria-Hungary was already at war with Serbia, should not be invocable in the present instance, adding that it certainly could not be denied that a state of war existed between Austria-Hungary and Serbia.

I remarked that what he said was certainly true, but that nevertheless, he could not fail to recognise the sound basis of your Excellency's reasons which I had conveyed to him. Furthermore, he was not to forget that upon several occasions I had begged him to note that we were interested in the maintenance of the political and economical independence of Serbia and of the Balkan equilibrium. It was beyond doubt that war was undertaken by Austria-Hungary against Serbia, threatening her independence and the aforesaid equilibrium and that this could not be considered by us as other than opposed to our vital interests. Baron Burian expressed himself as recognising that before embarking upon a discussion of the question of compensation it was necessary to establish the basis of it. But he must recognise at the same time that the question of compensation in general, like that placed by the Royal Italian Government upon grounds of the cession of territories possessed at present by the Monarchy, had no character of actuality. Therefore he could not pronounce at present upon this because the Imperial and Royal Government was not yet in a position to undertake a military action against Serbia. I remarked

that it did not seem to me that he had considered the question of compensation in the same light when I had declared to him that it was carried by the Royal Italian Government on to the ground of the cession of territories effectively belonging to Austria-Hungary. On that occasion he had, in fact, declared to me that he was disposed to enter into discussion with us, and that he was actuated by the best wishes to arrive at an agreement. But Baron Burian, proceeding, added that as soon as the time should have come to initiate the said action against Serbia he would not fail to keep our declaration before him, and seeing that the diplomatic measures would keep pace with the military action, no operation would be undertaken before the agreement should be initiated. I remarked that the question of compensation had, in my view, not only the character of actuality, but even of urgency, and it was desirable to take it up since all delay could not be other than detrimental.

On this subject I pointed out to him that the question of the eventual satisfaction to be given by us to our national aspirations, ranks in importance above all other considerations, and that this question could not be left without an early solution, because in view of the state of mind of our public opinion it might give rise to grave dangers.

To this Baron Burian replied that the considerations I submitted to him were certainly of importance to us, but that Italy should also take into consideration the position of the Imperial and Royal Government, and he added that we had established a limit which would be reached automatically, Austria-Hungary being at war with Serbia. The military actions of the Austro-Hungarian troops against that Power could certainly not be delayed, and the Austro-Hungarian Government would not fail then to fulfil its obligations, which should reassure us on every score. I answered that it did not seem to me that these statements could reassure us. In the first place, in fact, he had declared to me that he could not admit our interpretation of Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance, namely that the agreement contemplated by that article should be not merely initiated but actually carried to its conclusion before the inception of any military operations against Serbia and Montenegro. In the second place he persisted in declining to bind himself at once on the subject of the basis of the compensation to which we were entitled, asserting that such a question had no character of actuality. Baron Burian rejoined that it was certainly true that, in his view, the agreement should be only initiated, and not carried to its conclusion, before any military operations were undertaken against Serbia; he would, however, do everything possible to carry it to a conclusion, and it was only in the event of this proving impracticable that the military operations would nevertheless have to pursue their course. It was also true that he did not consider himself able to pronounce at once upon the subject of the basis of the compensation, but he would do so when the proper time should have arrived.

I told Baron Burian, in answer, that it was useless to speak of initiating at what he should consider the proper moment a discussion concerning the agreement, considering that he was not disposed to make a pronouncement upon the subject of the basis of the compensation proposed by us. Such a discussion, as I had already intimated to him, could not be accepted by the Royal Italian Government for the reasons which I had previously stated, on several occasions, saving only when it should concern such compensation as the cession of territories actually possessed by Austria-Hungary. Baron Burian replied that in his opinion the moment had not yet arrived for a pronouncement upon the question, but that when that happened he would keep this declaration in sight and that he would take care to make a pronouncement before the initiation of the negotiations for the agreement. Deeming it advisable, finally, to repeat once more to Baron Burian that the Royal Italian Government maintained the declaration in the last part of your Excellency's telegram, he told me that he would not fail to bear it in mind at the proper time.

Baron Burian's replies show once more how little he is disposed, at least at present, to adopt your Excellency's views on the subject of the question of principle and of the interpretation of Article VII. of the Treaty of Alliance.

My conversations with him on this subject might be indefinitely prolonged without attaining any practical result, since he would always formulate new arguments in support of the proposition which he advances. It would therefore be idle, notwithstanding all my endeavours, to believe it possible to induce him to a change of attitude.

AVARNA.

No. 35.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 4th March, 1915.

I, TOO, conclude that there is nothing to be expected from the protraction of the discussion with Baron Burian regarding territorial compensation under Article VII. But I think that it may not be without purpose clearly to recapitulate the following settled points in the declarations successively made by us in the course of the interviews :

(1) That no military action by Austria-Hungary in the Balkans may be undertaken unless the agreement relating to compensation should antecedently have been carried to its conclusion, we adhering rigidly to the text of Article VII. ;

(2) That any infraction of the above would be considered by us as an open violation of the treaty, in view of which Italy resumes her full liberty of action so as to protect her proper rights and interests ;

(3) That no proposal to discuss compensation can conduce to any agreement unless it has in view the cession of territories actually possessed by Austria-Hungary ;

(4) That availing ourselves of the provisions of Article VII., we insist on compensation on the ground of the inception of military action by Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, independently of any result to which such action may lead; not excluding, however, that other indemnities may be stipulated for conditionally and proportionately to the advantages which Austria-Hungary may, in effect, succeed in obtaining.

(5) That the fixed quota of compensation correlative to the actual inception of military action independently of its results, far from being kept secret, should be given effect to by the actual transference of the ceded territories and their immediate occupation on the part of Italy.

(6) That we do not admit any discussion of compensation on our part regarding the occupation of the Dodecanesus and Valona, and this for various reasons already submitted by your Excellency to Baron Burian.

SONNINO.

No. 36.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 4th March, 1915.

THE Italian Chargé d'Affaires at Cetinje telegraphs that the Minister for Foreign Affairs there has made the following communication:

“At 3 o'clock this morning five Austrian torpedo-boats invaded port Antivari, sank Royal Yacht, disembarked during bombardment sailors with mitrailleuses, which they fired to keep back Montenegrins whilst they set fire to the Government depot, only succeeding, however, in burning a small part of it. One person killed, three others wounded.”

It is desirable that your Excellency should see the Minister for Foreign Affairs there regarding these military operations of Austro-Hungarian forces against Montenegro, which are in open conflict with our communications of the 22nd February last to that Government, and also with the declarations of Baron Burian.

SONNINO.

No. 37.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 7th March, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 7th.

BARON BURIAN informed me spontaneously that his reply to our question of principle would not be long delayed. I remarked that his consistent refusal until now to pronounce upon this point, repeated to me even in our interview of the 2nd March, certainly had not encouraged me to hope that he would make me to-day a similar communication. Baron Burian replied that he could not find this remark of mine other than just, but that he should point out that in the said interview he had assured me that when the proper

moment arrived he would pronounce upon this question which it was desirable to clear up so as to provide some result from the present situation.

AVARNA.

No. 38.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 8th March, 1915.

PRINCE VON BULOW informs me that he has received dispatches from Berlin which after informing him that the German Government had laboured strenuously at Vienna to induce Austria-Hungary to enter into negotiations with Italy, was able to assure him that at last the attitude of Vienna had undergone a change to such an extent that there was every hope that the said negotiations might be carried to a satisfactory conclusion.

I replied that the Duke of Avarna had also telegraphed me to the same effect, having received news of this from Herr Tschirschky and that, further, Baron Burian had told him the day before yesterday that he hoped soon to afford him an answer on the question of principle concerning the grounds upon which the negotiations might be conducted.

SONNINO.

No. 39.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 9th March, 1915.

PRINCE VON BULOW has communicated to me a dispatch received from his Government in the following tenour: "Baron Burian has begged us to declare to the Italian Government that Austria-Hungary is ready to enter into negotiations with Italy, in accordance with the proposal of Baron Sonnino and on the basis of the cession of Austrian territory. The declaration to be made to the Italian Parliament would be edited in concert with Vienna. Baron Burian will do all possible to the end that the formula may be edited by mutual concurrence as quickly as possible."

I pointed out to Prince von Bülow that it was necessary to avoid all misapprehensions, and that I had never referred to declarations to be made to Parliament concerning the opening of negotiations, but to the necessity of not keeping secret the agreement regarding compensation as soon as this should be concluded.

Prince von Bülow made the following note:

"Baron Sonnino has no objection, once the agreement is concluded, to the respective declaration which is to be presented to Parliament being prepared in concert with Baron Burian, but he has no intention of making any declaration to Parliament of the fact that negotiations had begun or were being transacted.

"This because, according to Baron Sonnino, any declaration of that nature would render more difficult the issue of those

negotiations by exciting public opinion. He, too, desires that all dispatch should be employed."

I added to Prince von Bülow that I would await the communication from the Duke of Avarna on the conference which he may have to-day with Baron Burian.

SONNINO.

No. 40.

The Italian Ambassador at Berlin to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Berlin, 9th March, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 10th.

HERR VON JAGOW has just informed me that Baron Burian had begged him to convey to us his answer in the affirmative to the question of principle which we had submitted. The Austro-Hungarian Government definitely consents, in conformity with the demands of the Royal Italian Government that the discussion regarding the compensation arising out of Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance should be carried on to the ground of the cession of territories at present belonging to the Monarchy. Baron Burian expressed the wish to place himself at the earliest moment in communication with the Italian Ambassador at Vienna, so as to come to an understanding regarding the declaration which the Royal Italian Government might desire to make to Parliament on the subject.

BOLLATI.

No. 41.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Vienna, 9th March, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 9th.

BARON BURIAN has informed me that the Imperial and Royal Government consented to discuss the question of compensation covered by Article VII. of the Triple Alliance on the actual basis proposed by the Italian Government, that is to say on the ground of the cession of territories belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. He indicated in this connection the careful examination to which that question had been submitted by the Imperial and Royal Government and to the great difficulties which it had been necessary to overcome so as to arrive at the said decision. And he pointed out that this decision resulted from the desire to come to an understanding with the Royal Italian Government that should maintain good reciprocal relations, avoiding all friction, and thus rendering possible the co-operation of the two Governments towards common aims of general policy. This point of view which he had several times manifested to me was that by which he had always been guided and it corresponded to what I had submitted at our first interview, of the 17th January last, on this subject of compensation, when I spoke to him of the logical and political reasons involved.

Baron Burian next remarked that the various particulars concerning the question, such, for instance, as those concerned with

the stipulation of a previous agreement, should in his opinion be examined in our further conversations.

Finally, Baron Burian told me that if your Excellency thought it advisable, from considerations of expediency, to make public the fact that the two Governments had already entered into conversations on the question of compensation, he begged your Excellency to divulge to him in confidence the actual terms of that publication.

I replied that I was in ignorance of your Excellency's intentions, but that as a matter of my own personal opinion I supposed that as long as the negotiations lasted your Excellency would desire to keep secret the fact that they were taking place and the object at which they aimed.

Nevertheless, I would refer his request to your Excellency.

AVARNA.

II

No. 42.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 10th March, 1915.

THE Italian Government had already withdrawn all proposals of discussion on the subject of the compensation covered by Article VII., but the general situation is too serious and the matter too important to permit to-day of any question of mere form; therefore we accept the discussion upon the basis at length admitted by the Imperial and Royal Government. We do not intend to make any communication to Parliament or to the public regarding the inception of the negotiations.

Now that the divergence on the score of principle, regarding the basis of the negotiations, has been removed, I hope that we shall enter immediately into treaty and that this may be carried speedily forward so that we may reach an agreement, the conclusion of which must absolutely precede, in accordance with my reiterated declarations, any Austro-Hungarian military action in the Balkans.

These negotiations are to be conducted directly between the two Governments without the intervention of third parties.

The points of departure to be made clear previously are :

(1) Absolute secrecy regarding the negotiations. Any indiscretion concerning their inception or progress would compel the Royal Italian Government to withdraw its proposals and to break off all discussion.

(2) When the agreement is concluded it should immediately be given effect. Otherwise the Royal Italian Government would lack the necessary political force to obtain from the nation that moral ratification which would be indispensable for the performance of the concluded agreement.

(3) To eliminate fresh contention or friction and the recurrence of regrettable incidents, and at the same time to leave the necessary

liberty of action to the Imperial and Royal Government in the conduct of the war, it is necessary that the agreement should cover the whole duration of the said war in all that regards the possible invocation of Article VII.

Given that Government's acceptance of these bases, we declare ourselves ready to specify our demands, restricting ourselves to that minimum of compensation which we consider indispensable to fulfil the actual aims of the agreement invoked, namely to eliminate permanently between the two States all subject of discord, creating instead between them a normal condition of cordiality and of possible co-operation towards common aims of general policy.

And in the great and common interest of speedily reaching an agreement, eliminating from the outset all suspicion of intentional dilatoriness, I would suggest that a term of say two weeks should be established for the conduct of the negotiations, and if at the end of that term no conclusion should have been reached, it should be understood that all proposals made by either of the parties would be withdrawn and considered as of no effect, the parties returning to the *status quo ante* of reciprocal liberty.

SONNINO.

No. 43.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
Vienna, 13th March, 1915.
 (Telegram.) *recd. 13th.*

I HAVE conveyed to Baron Burian the various points contained in the telegram of the 10th March, expressing myself in accordance with the instructions communicated to me by your Excellency.

Baron Burian informed me that he took note of the intentions of your Excellency not to make any communication to Parliament or to the public concerning the inception of the negotiations. With regard to the declaration several times repeated by your Excellency that the conclusion of the agreement must absolutely precede all military operations by Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, Baron Burian indicated that he could not change his opinion regarding the interpretation of Article VII. of the Treaty of Alliance, the reasons for which he had had occasion to explain to me in previous conversations. I remarked that the objection by virtue of which he withheld his consent that the agreement should be carried to a conclusion before any military operation took place in the Balkans did not appear to me now to have any foundation after the hope manifested by your Excellency that we should enter immediately into treaty and that this might be speedily carried forward. To this Baron Burian replied that he recognized that his objection was, in fact, eliminated by the considerations put forward by your Excellency, according to which both parties were to establish a term within which the negotiations concerning the agreement were to be concluded. He would therefore strive, in accordance with your Excellency's wishes, to expedite the negotiations with a view to arriving at an agreement.

With regard to the three points previously to be made clear, Baron Burian told me :

(1) That he agreed to preserve absolute secrecy on the subject of the negotiations but with the condition that Germany should be kept informed, for the reasons aforementioned.

(2) That if Article VII. provided that the agreement should be anticipatory, it did not, however, provide that its fulfilment should also be anticipatory because thus in the main the meaning of that article would be violated. I pointed out that if he admitted that the agreement should be anticipatory of, and not contemporary with, or consecutive to the action, he could not avoid admitting at the same time that the substance of this agreement in which the compensation was defined must be considered as of like character. Therefore the fixed quota of the compensation correlative to the inception of military operations in the Balkans independently of their results, should not be kept secret but rather should be given effect by the actual transference of the territories ceded and by the immediate occupation of these on the part of Italy. I had already conveyed to him the considerations of a political order which rendered necessary the effective transference of the territories ceded. Further, I thought it well to remind him of what I had said in our first interview, on the 17th January, namely that to direct public opinion in Italy and to dispose it favourably towards the agreement, it was necessary to show at the outset a minimum of advantages that were sure and tangible and not merely dependent upon uncertain and remote eventualities. Baron Burian replied that in the case with which we were concerned it would be impossible for the Imperial and Royal Government to admit the transference of any territory of the Monarchy until peace should be concluded, and this owing to several considerations rendered imperative by the very nature of things. He added that the reasons of internal policy which I had advanced might be of importance to us, but that for the Imperial and Royal Government there also existed reasons which on his side he could not disregard.

He concluded by manifesting the hope that the Italian Government would not refuse to reconsider this second point. As for the third point raised, Baron Burian informed me that he associated himself entirely with all that your Excellency set forth in it, namely that the agreement should cover the whole duration of the war in all that regards the possible invocation of Article VII. Finally, on the subject of your Excellency's proposals to establish a term of two weeks for the conduct of the negotiations, Baron Burian said that if that statement of a term was the expression of your Excellency's wish that the negotiations should be conducted in a speedy manner, he entirely concurred, but it seemed to him that it would be very difficult to decide at the outset upon a given number of days. In the course of the interview Baron Burian, having incidentally referred to his counter-proposals of compensation on the score of our occupation of Valona and of the Dodecanesus,

I judged it advisable to declare to him that for the reasons already set forth we could not admit any discussion of compensation on our part in connection with those occupations. To this Baron Burian replied that he maintained his right to compensation in connection with those occupations, in accordance with Article VII., and that he would in due season return to the subject.

As your Excellency will have gathered, Baron Burian expressed himself to me in such explicit terms with regard to the second point raised, that it is to be doubted if he can subsequently modify the opinion given, namely that he cannot consent that the agreement, when concluded, shall be given immediate effect.

AVARNA.

No. 44.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 13th March, 1915.

I must declare that the interview with Baron Burian of which your Excellency informs me leaves little room for hope, not indeed that a discussion may be speedily carried to fulfilment, but even that it may be initiated with regard to the territories actually in the possession of Austria-Hungary.

I might even disregard for the moment the first serious divergence of opinion, relating to the interpretation to be placed upon the words "*accord préalable*" of Article VII., in view of the assurance that if the present negotiations, which should relate to the whole duration of the war, could be conducted to a speedy conclusion, it would be a long time before the hypothetical case upon which the dissension hinges would arise, namely that of a military action undertaken in the Balkans before an agreement should have been concluded, although its discussion were already initiated.

I should have no objection to offer to Germany's being kept currently informed of the course of the negotiations, so long as it remains firmly established that these are to be conducted directly between the Austro-Hungarian and the Italian Governments.

As for the length of the term to which the discussion is to be confined, it is useless to dwell upon this as long as we are confronted by the other substantial divergence of opinion on the principal point which I indicated in my last telegram as a condition *sine qua non* of the initiation of a discussion, namely the preliminary compact for immediate performance of the agreement to be concluded. As I have already explained, this condition is from our point of view essential, since without it no Government in Italy to-day could have the necessary political force to guarantee the practical fulfilment of the engagements contracted. Therefore, it would be more than fruitless, it would be detrimental, to enter into treaties of eventual reciprocal obligations whose effective fulfilment it would be impossible to guarantee.

Nor will I dwell upon the insistence of Baron Burian to invoke now Article VII. on the score of our occupations of the Dodecanesus

and Valona. For the reasons already given the Royal Italian Government cannot accept the discussion of this. But this insistence, on the part of Baron Burian, may be accepted as a proof of how slight is the probability of success that would now attend the resumption of negotiations concerning the compensation to which Article VII. relates, given the present frame of mind of the Imperial and Royal Government.

SONNINO.

No. 45.

*The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Vienna, 16th March, 1915.*

(Telegram.)

recd. 16th.

I HAVE conveyed to Baron Burian your Excellency's intimations on the subject of the declarations which he made to me at our last interview, and insisting upon the principal one among the points I had submitted in that same interview, namely that which regards the preliminary compact for the immediate performance of the agreement to be concluded, I gave him the substance of the actual telegram. Baron Burian told me, in regard to the interpretation to be given to the words "*accord préalable*," that although he could not modify his opinion on the subject of that interpretation, he could at least declare to me that once he should have entered upon the negotiations leading to an agreement he would not disturb them, avoiding all military action in the Balkans during the period to be established by mutual consent for the conduct of those negotiations. With regard to the preliminary compact, respecting the immediate performance of the agreement, Baron Burian recalled what he had said to me in our interview of Friday last, namely that Article VII. of the Treaty of Alliance spoke of a preliminary agreement, and he added that the realization of the compensation by one of the contracting parties must be simultaneous with the advantages which the other party would have assured itself. Therefore he could only persist in the declaration made in the said interview, namely that the transference of territory belonging to the Monarchy would not be possible until peace should be concluded.

I replied that this refusal on his part to engage himself in anticipation to carry the agreement into effect as soon as concluded, rendered useless the initiation of any discussion, since that preliminary engagement must be accounted a condition *sine qua non* of the initiation of the said discussion.

On this subject I should remind him that such a condition was essential to us, seeing that without it no Government in Italy could wield the political force necessary to guarantee the practical fulfilment of the engagements to be undertaken. Therefore it would be not only fruitless but actually detrimental to enter into negotiations of eventual reciprocal obligations whose effective performance it would be impossible to guarantee.

To this Baron Burian replied that besides the various considerations of an imperative order already pointed out to me, which did not permit the Imperial and Royal Government to enter into the preliminary engagement in question, there existed others of a moral and legal character. The former of these concerned the dignity of the Sovereign and the prestige of the Monarchy as a great Power; the latter concerned the immediate transference of the territories to be ceded, which it would be impossible to effect through administrative channels.

To these considerations which rendered impossible the performance of the agreement immediately upon its being concluded, were further to be added the circumstance that the Imperial and Royal Government could certainly not decide during the war the fate of populations whose sons were now fighting for the integrity of the Monarchy.

The Imperial and Royal Government had consented to discuss the question of compensation on the basis proposed by the Royal Italian Government, but the various members of that Government were already agreed not to admit the immediate transference of the territories to be ceded, since this should be postponed until the end of the war.

On the above basis the Imperial and Royal Government was still disposed to enter into negotiations with the Royal Italian Government, actuated in that respect by the best of intentions. But the condition made by the Royal Italian Government rendered the situation difficult, and increased, moreover, the great sacrifice which the Imperial and Royal Government was prepared to make with the object of reaching a friendly and complete understanding with Italy.

Baron Burian concluded by saying that the German Government entirely shared his opinion on the subject of the immediate transference of the territories to be ceded. And the demand in this connection made by the Royal Italian Government to the Imperial and Royal Government was considered by the German Government to be inadmissible.

I answered Baron Burian that on that subject I could only refer him to what I had already said regarding the preliminary compact for the immediate performance of the agreement to be concluded, this being considered by the Royal Italian Government as a condition *sine qua non* of the initiation of the discussion, and one from which we did not think it possible to depart.

Finally, on the subject of our occupation of Valona and of the Dodecanesus, Baron Burian declared that he maintained the right to the compensation due to the Imperial and Royal Government, this right being based upon Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance.

He did not, however, think it necessary to insist upon the question particularly as he had not yet formulated precise demands for compensation. At the present moment he had no wish to trammel the negotiations, but was on the contrary actuated by the desire that these might proceed and lead to results.

Notwithstanding the renewed and urgent representations which I repeatedly made to Baron Burian so as to induce him to enter into your Excellency's point of view, he persisted in his own opinion concerning the immediate performance of the agreement, and I cannot think, judging by the manner in which he expressed himself, that he will depart from this.

AVARNA.

No. 46.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassadors at Vienna and Berlin.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 17th March, 1915.

PRINCE VON BÜLOW came to see me on the 15th, and appeared deeply concerned by the news which had reached him of the state of our negotiations with Vienna and by the preliminary conditions submitted by us to Baron Burian.

The condition which causes him the greatest anxiety, because he deems it such as to render impossible an agreement, is that of the *immediate performance* to be given to the cession of territories that might be agreed. He does not think this should be exacted of Austria. He states that there is no precedent in history; he cites the instances of Nice and Savoy, which were transferred after the conclusion of war; and says that this condition imposed by us is new. The Austrian Government accepted our proposal that the agreement should not remain secret after its conclusion and until the end of the war. Once the agreement were concluded we should have every guarantee of its fulfilment in the signature of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Austria. And in addition there would be the guarantee of Germany as mediator and approver of the agreement.

The immediate transference of the ceded territories would provoke a revolution in Vienna. It is necessary to obtain the consent of Parliament for the cession of territories. And to-day an Austro-Hungarian Parliament would rebel against any such proposal.

I replied that the condition had been imposed by us as indispensable because if the effective cession of the territories in question were postponed until after the restoration of peace, no Government could guarantee to restrain throughout the whole duration of the war the bellicose impulses of the nation.

Every feature of the war, every oscillation of the vicissitudes of the struggle would give rise to suspicion, agitation, and tumult.

The case of Nice and Savoy is not comparable with the present one; it was a case then of concessions to be made conditionally to the effective acquisitions of territory on the part of Piedmont, and the compact lay between those who were companions in arms.

The soldiers of Nice and Savoy fought during that war on the same side and against the same foe whether the cession were to be made or not. What, instead, in the present war, would be the position of the soldiers belonging to the ceded territories? If

they deserted with what justice could they be punished? How could it be avoided that public opinion in Italy must rise against the harsh fate imposed upon them of continuing to fight and die for a cause which was no longer their own?

This question of immediate performance was not a new condition imposed by us. I had referred to it in my interviews with Prince von Bülow from the very beginning, speaking precisely of the soldiers under the Austrian banner.

The argument adduced of the need for the sanction of the Austro-Hungarian Parliament was a two-edged weapon. The Emperor to-day exercised full powers. Every stipulation whose fulfilment and whose very validity remained in suspense justified all the mistrust of the Italian people. At the end of the war if the Parliament were to withhold its sanction of the cessions accorded, nothing could then be done and Italy would have been deluded.

Prince von Bülow replied that he was morally convinced that apart from this condition of immediate performance, an agreement between Austria-Hungary and Italy regarding the territorial question could be reached; but he did not account an understanding possible upon that point. He referred to all the terrible consequences, both in the immediate and distant future, of a rupture, between Italy and Germany.

He proposed in the end that for the present the discussion on this question of immediate performance should be put aside, leaving it until we should have come to an agreement on all the other points to be discussed.

He was convinced that in this way it would still be possible to arrive at a conclusion, "unless," he added, "you should already have made up your minds for war in March."

I replied that I had frankly expressed to him my opinion; but that being unable to take upon myself alone the responsibility of a decision I would refer in all sincerity and exactitude his arguments to the President and Council.

SONNINO.

No. 47.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 17th March, 1915.

BARON BURIAN, in announcing his opposition to the compact of immediate performance, added that "The realization of compensation on the part of one of the contracting parties must be simultaneous to the advantages which the other party should have assured itself." But by putting the question in this way there is an end to the premise which appeared to have been accepted, that the territorial concessions were to be made to us as compensation for the liberty of action to be granted Austria-Hungary for the whole duration of the war, whatever its results. If we subordinate compensation to advantages, then the preliminary and definitive *forfait* that was sought at once disappears. Whereas immediate performance is logically inherent in an agreement thus conceived.

Baron Burian has declared that "The Imperial and Royal Government certainly could decide during the war the fate of populations whose sons were now fighting for the integrity of the Monarchy." It is not possible that this assertion should exactly represent the intimate thoughts of Baron Burian, because, if that were so, it would be idle to negotiate an agreement regarding the cession of territories now possessed by the Monarchy from the moment that the ceding party did not account itself entitled to decide upon the matter of the actual cessions and upon the fate of the respective populations.

With regard to the immediate execution of the agreements, considering that the Imperial and Royal Government has accepted the proposition that such agreements are to be made public immediately upon their conclusion, I am unable to account for Baron Burian's persistent refusal to admit the required performance. The moral and political effect which the cession of territories might produce upon the Austro-Hungarian public in general, and upon that of Vienna in particular (see what was said by Prince von Bülow) would be discounted immediately on the morrow of their announcement, and, from another point of view, with regard to the general defence of the Empire, any decrease in the ranks of the combatants resulting from the discharge of soldiers derived from the ceded territories, would be more than compensated by the freer disposal of the remaining forces, in consequence of the increased security resulting from concluded agreements.

SONNINO.

No. 48.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassadors at Vienna and Berlin.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 17th March, 1915.

PRINCE VON BÜLOW came to see me to-day and began by pointing out the grave danger that the negotiations between Austria-Hungary and Italy may be rendered abortive through the condition we had appended demanding immediate performance. He said further that the Emperor of Germany might also guarantee the fulfilment of the agreement after the war.

I replied giving various reasons why we must insist upon our demand, reasons which take into account the general conditions of public opinion in Italy as also in Austria. I pointed out to him how difficult it is to settle firm grounds of negotiation with the Austro-Hungarian Government, and I quoted the words uttered on the 15th inst. by Baron Burian to the Duke of Avarna, showing that the former appears ever to seek to make the cession of Austrian territories to Italy depend upon the effective attainment of advantages on the part of Austria at the end of a victorious war. Prince von Bülow made the following note :

"Baron Sonnino points out to me that the advantages at once accruing to Austria-Hungary from the agreement consist in the

guarantee she would thus obtain of Italy's neutrality throughout the war. Baron Burian, on the other hand, appears to subordinate all actual cession of territory to Italy to the condition that Austria should in effect realise territorial acquisitions and other advantages at the end of the war.

"Baron Burian's point of view renders impossible an agreement acceptable to Baron Sonnino, that is to say, an agreement having the nature of a *forfait*: the cession of territory at present Austrian, on the one side, against a guarantee of neutrality for the duration of the war on the other, whatever may be the issue of that war."

I told Prince von Bülow that I had no wish to precipitate matters, but that I would no longer undertake the initiative or make any proposals; that if the Austro-Hungarian Government desired to arrive at any conclusion, it could submit its proposals clearly making them as wide as possible so that there might be a probability of result.

Prince von Bülow informed me that he would communicate the above to Berlin.

SONNINO.

No. 49.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 20th March, 1915.

PRINCE VON BÜLOW has announced to me, in pursuance of instructions from the Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg after audience with the Emperor William, "that he is requested to declare to me that the Imperial German Government offers to Italy a full and complete guarantee that the agreement to be concluded between Italy and Austria-Hungary should be faithfully and loyally given effect as soon as peace should be concluded.

Further, he is informed by Herr von Jagow that there is a rumour to the effect that Austria-Hungary does not yet desire the agreement with Italy, and that she wishes to protract the negotiations concerning it. Herr von Jagow is convinced that there is no truth in this rumour. The Emperor Franz-Josef once having taken this grave resolve will loyally adhere to it. The Ambassador, Herr von Tschirscky, had telegraphed to him from Vienna that Baron Burian had the earnest intention of coming as soon as possible to an understanding with Italy on the subject of a cession of territory as a basis for more trustful and friendly relations henceforth between the two nations.

As to a guarantee to be given to Italy for the faithful fulfilment of the Treaty, he is ready to discuss this further with the Duke of Avarna. Herr von Jagow believes that "it is incontestable that Baron Burian is disposed to the cession of territory, and as a correlative (*gegenleistung*) he requires only that Italy shall renounce the demands based upon Article VII." Jagow adds that in this manner, he believes, a basis of negotiations has been found, it being

clear that "Austria-Hungary consents to a cession of Austro-Hungarian territory, and that she demands of Italy no more than the absolute maintenance of neutrality throughout the war."

He is under the impression that Baron Burian's words regarding the Dodecanesus and his other expressions of uncertain tenour, were employed rather to explain his own point of view concerning the past, and that a practical value is not to be attached to them. Prince von Bülow exhorted us to a resumption of the conversations between Baron Burian and the Duke of Avarna at Vienna.

I replied pointing out some of the chief reasons, already submitted to him in our last interview, that rendered indispensable the immediate performance of the agreement to be concluded.

SONNINO.

No. 50.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 20th March, 1915.

BARON MACCHIO asked me what stage things had reached at Vienna.

I gave him the history of the negotiations down to to-day, telling him that the question of performance, immediate or postponed, had checked all progress. Prince von Bülow had suggested putting aside, without prejudice, this point, and discussing meanwhile the rest. I had not opposed this, although I entertained the doubt that without the settlement of the question of performance the discussion must remain in the air. In any case I consented that the conversations at Vienna should be resumed if Baron Burian would make clear and definite proposals upon which they might turn.

Baron Macchio considered it expedient first to determine the question of performance during or after the war. He maintained that it was impossible it should be immediate. I pointed out to him various very grave difficulties which militated against postponed performance. At the end of the war the party that would have pledged itself to neutrality would already have performed all that it should and could perform, whether or not Parliament approved the action of the Government; whilst the other party, instead, would have done nothing beyond assuming an engagement to make territorial concessions conditionally on Parliamentary consent, an engagement which would come to nothing if this consent were withheld.

I pointed out the other and extremely grave question concerning the soldiers who would be obliged to continue to fight for a cause which would no longer be their own. How could public opinion tolerate that? In Austria there prevailed the territorial system which facilitated the discharge of soldiers in groups corresponding to the regions whence they were derived.

Baron Macchio recognised the reasonableness of the first point, regarding the engagement's dependence upon parliamentary

sanction; he would refer it to Baron Burian to the end that the latter should discover and propose some other guarantee.

With regard to the soldiers he said that their dismissal during the war would disorganise the army. There were also many difficulties of an administrative nature in the way of the transference of territories during hostilities.

He concluded that it was being proposed to resume these conversations, which might prove fruitful, although Baron Burian held that the negotiations should be conducted at Vienna.

SONNINO.

No. 51.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 21st March, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 21st.

I HAVE seen Baron Burian on the subject of the contents of your Excellency's telegrams, conveying to him the substance of those same telegrams.

Baron Burian gathered, first of all, that the phrase used by him in our interview of the 15th inst., according to which "the realization of compensation by one of the contracting parties should be simultaneous with the advantages of which the other should come to be assured," had given rise to a misapprehension on your Excellency's part, of which he had already been informed by the German Ambassador here.

He pursued that in his view the word "simultaneous" was not to be interpreted as having the meaning that the compensation to be accorded to one of the contracting parties were to be proportioned to the advantages which the other should have received. On this subject he declared to me that if the agreement were concluded now, that is to say, before any military operation by Austria-Hungary in the Balkans, the stipulations of the agreement tacitly concerning the compensation, would preserve their validity and would be realized at the end of the war independently of the results of the said military action.

Baron Burian further informed me that he would draw up the outlines of an agreement having the nature of a *forfait*, conceived in the very terms indicated by your Excellency, but that he could not pronounce upon it, or even accept it in principle, until he knew in full detail the demands of the Royal Italian Government on the subject of compensation, and until he himself should have had occasion on his side to formulate his own conditions.

With regard to your Excellency's statement that immediate performance was logically inherent in such an agreement, Baron Burian remarked that he could not admit the justice of this corollary.

For the rest, he persisted in affirming that for the reasons already urged, the cession of territories of the Monarchy could not be given effect until after the conclusion of peace.

With reference to that which concerns the sanction of the Parliaments of Austria and Hungary, Baron Burian observed that there was no doubt whatever that the agreement to be drawn up would be duly approved by the Parliaments, since they could not reject an act discharged in accordance with the full powers vested in His Majesty the Emperor.

When I had communicated to Baron Burian the matter of your Excellency's intimations to Prince von Bülow, he told me that he was making the proposal to enter into negotiations with the Royal Italian Government and he had already informed Baron Macchio of this. He therefore begged your Excellency to follow the programme projected some time ago, namely to formulate the demands, and then he on his side would make known his answers and his conditions.

And he added that he hoped your Excellency would reconsider the decision not to take any initiative or to make proposals, a decision which he supposed had been occasioned by the misapprehension which was now cleared up.

AVARNA.

No. 52.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 22nd March, 1915.

I TAKE note both of the explanations supplied by Baron Burian of some earlier phrases of his which admitted of dubious interpretation, and of his formal proposal to enter into negotiations with the Royal Italian Government.

I regret, extremely, however, that he should not realize the utter impossibility for any Government in Italy seriously to undertake engagements trammelling its own liberty of action over an at present indefinite but unquestionably protracted period, against no more than promises of territorial cessions that are not to be put into effect until the end of the present war. Moreover it is clearly to be seen that the prospect of an immediate performance would greatly enhance in public opinion the arguments favouring moderation in the demands, whilst every postponement must incite it to greater exactions.

Nevertheless I profess myself ready, as I have already announced, to Prince von Bulow and to Baron Macchio, seriously to examine any concrete proposal that the Imperial and Royal Government may place before us, and let me add that with intent to facilitate discussion I should also be disposed to consider as if never made, so far as future effects are concerned, any proposal submitted that should not be accepted by us.

SONNINO.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 23rd March, 1915.

BARON MACCHIO, whom I saw this morning, told me that he had received two telegrams from Baron Burian regarding the conversations he had held with the Duke of Avarna. These agree with the communications of the latter. Baron Burian supposes that since he has cleared up the misapprehension concerning words which he had previously uttered, I should now formulate the demands of Italy; particularly since the fulfilment of the agreement at the end of the war would be guaranteed by Germany.

I replied that I must adhere to the conditions explained to the Duke of Avarna again in my telegram of yesterday. I take note of the proposal of Baron Burian to open negotiations; but I continue in doubt regarding the possibility of arriving at an understanding until we are agreed upon the immediate performance of all that should be concerted, so that I cannot at present make proposals or take the initiative. But I shall welcome and examine any proposal that Baron Burian may place before us, and with a view to facilitating matters I should consider any proposal not accepted by us as if never made and I should observe all secrecy with regard to such proposals and the respective negotiations.

I therefore explained again in a friendly manner to Baron Macchio the various practical reasons that justify the great importance attached by the Royal Italian Government to the question of the immediate fulfilment of any agreement; that is to say, of the immediate transference of the territories that it may be agreed that Austria-Hungary should cede to Italy; and this to the end that throughout the indefinite duration of the war the maintenance of the accepted undertaking of neutrality may be absolutely assured.

Austria-Hungary has to-day in the territories that may come into question a number of soldiers greater than that which she would have to discharge on the day when those territories came to be effectively ceded; and in view of the system of territorial recruiting it would not be any more difficult quickly to concentrate within the said territories all the soldiers appertaining to them by birth or residence than it would be to dismiss a class to their homes. Nor can this in any way disorganise the army. On the other hand the maintaining under arms by the Empire of between 40,000 and 50,000 men belonging to territories whose cession to Italy had been decreed would give rise to a thousand daily incidents, to unheard-of difficulties and to a continual reaction of public opinion.

Then, too, the Austro-Hungarian Parliamentary question was of no little importance. It is possible that public opinion should consent resignedly to the cession of territories in consideration of the advantage of acquiring thus a greater liberty of action and of

not having to defend a whole line of frontier ; but this only as long as there is hope of obtaining the victory.

I am disposed to believe that a victorious Austria would faithfully maintain at the end of the war the terms of the compact that in a certain measure would have contributed to the victory ; but it is contrary to human nature that the Austrian public, and with it the Parliament, on the day when it should issue defeated from the war and be compelled to relinquish provinces to the victorious enemy, should not rebel against the cession of other territories for the benefit of one who had taken no part in the struggle and whose abstention was proven by the facts to have been insufficient to ensure victory. The guarantee of Germany would hold good in the case of a victorious Germany, which presupposes also the victory of Austria, but it would be of less value in the event of both being defeated.

SONNINO.

No. 54.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 24th March, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 24th.

BARON BURIAN has told me that it is not correct to state that the cession of territories to be made at the end of the war would be conditional and dependent on the Austro-Hungarian Parliament's approval of the stipulated agreement on the subject between the two Governments. Since all international treaties must be sanctioned by the Parliaments of the Monarchy it was necessary that the said agreement should be submitted to them for approval. But this was not a condition concerning its validity towards Italy nor did it constitute a condition of its performance.

As for the approval of the agreement by the Parliaments, that was not for a moment to be held in doubt, for the reasons stated to me in the course of our conversation of the 20th inst. In what regards the other and extremely grave question of the soldiers who were to continue to fight in a cause that was no longer their own, Baron Burian observed that this argument was being the subject of his reflections, and that we could revert to it in our subsequent conversations.

Baron Burian intimated to me then that he had been informed by Herr von Tschirsky of the full and entire guarantee which the German Government proffered the Royal Italian Government that the agreement to be concluded between Italy and Austria-Hungary should be faithfully and loyally put into effect as soon as peace is concluded. Baron Burian declared to me that he consented to make concrete proposals provided that he obtained authority to do so from His Majesty the Emperor, and that he would inform me as soon as he should have obtained it. He was also disposed, equally with your Excellency, to consider on his side as if never made, so far as future effects are concerned, any proposal

submitted but not agreed upon by the two Governments. With regard, finally, to the question of the immediate performance of the agreement to be concluded, Baron Burian told me that he regretted to be unable on his side to share your Excellency's point of view on the subject. In his opinion it would be in fact impossible to qualify as a simple promise an agreement duly concluded and signed by the two Governments with the observance of all the formalities required to bestow upon the said agreement the character of an international covenant.

And he added that he was equally unable to share your Excellency's opinion that in this matter the Royal Italian Government would be the only one that assumed a serious undertaking trammelling its liberty for an indefinite period. Austria-Hungary too would assume on her side, upon signing the agreement, future engagements of an equally serious nature, which, by the mere circumstance of their publicity, would trammel her quite as effectively, and this independently of any provision that in the course of the conversations might be recognised as expedient to that end and practical.

As your Excellency will perceive, Baron Burian has persisted again on this occasion in his intention to postpone the effective cession of the territories to be ceded until after peace is restored.

I fear that it would be difficult to convince him of the reasons which render it absolutely necessary for us that such a cession should take place immediately upon the conclusion of the agreement.

AVARNA.

No. 55.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Telegram.)

Vienna, 24th March, 1915.

recd. 25th.

I WENT, at Baron Burian's invitation, to the Ballplatz, and he told me that he had begged me to go and see him so that he might inform me that he had been authorised by His Majesty the Emperor to make precise and concrete proposals upon which our conversations might turn. He intended to acquaint me "as soon as possible" with these proposals, and he would beg me for that purpose to visit him again.

AVARNA.

No. 56.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Telegram.)

Vienna, 27th March, 1915.

recd. 28th.

I WENT to the Ballplatz in response to a request from Baron Burian, and he informed me that the friendly conversations that had been proceeding for some months between Italy and Austria-

Hungary, with the object of consolidating their reciprocal relations, founding them upon complete good faith and aiming at eliminating all subjects of friction, thus rendering possible a mutual collaboration towards common ends of general policy, had led both Governments to recognise the expediency of an agreement for the conclusion of which he proposed the following stipulations :

(1) Italy should undertake to observe until the end of the present war a friendly neutrality, from political and economical points of view, towards Austria-Hungary and her allies.

(2) Similarly, Italy should further engage herself for the whole duration of the present war to leave Austria-Hungary full and complete liberty of action in the Balkans, and to renounce in advance any fresh compensation for the advantages, territorial or other, that might eventually accrue to Austria-Hungary from such liberty of action.

This stipulation, however, was not to include Albania, regarding which the agreement already in existence between Austria-Hungary and Italy, besides the decisions of the Conference of London, would remain in force.

Baron Burian then informed me that Austria-Hungary would, on her side, be prepared to make a cession of territory in Southern Tyrol comprising the city of Trent. The specified delimitation would be determined in such a manner as to take into account both the strategical exigencies which a new frontier would create for the Monarchy, and for the economic needs of the population.

When I observed that in my opinion such a proposal seemed to be somewhat vague, Baron Burian replied that he thought it was necessary first of all to acquaint us with the general principle of the cession that Austria-Hungary was disposed to make, without at present entering into particulars ; these, however,, he was prepared to communicate to your Excellency as soon as you desired it. Baron Burian added that the said cession of territory by Austria-Hungary would imply on the part of Italy the undertaking to assume the quota appertaining to the territory in question of the Austro-Hungarian Public Debt and of the provincial, municipal and other debts, in so far as these enjoy a State Guarantee. Similarly Italy would have to undertake the payment to Austria-Hungary of a lump sum in compensation for all the investments made by the State in the territory to be ceded, independently of the acquisition of the railways in this territory, and of collective and individual compensation (ecclesiastical properties, entails, pensions to old fonctionnaires, etc.).

Having requested Baron Burian to explain this last point, he replied that he thought it well to establish conditions that would guarantee henceforward the rights acquired from the clergy.

Proceeding, Baron Burian announced to me that as soon as the principles of the agreement were established on the above basis, Austria-Hungary would enter into discussion of the details.

The definitive understanding resulting from the discussions would be drawn up in a secret convention to be concluded between

Austria-Hungary and Italy. I reminded Baron Burian of what I had already made known to him, namely, that the agreement, far from remaining secret, must, as soon as concluded, be carried into effect by the transference of the ceded territories and their immediate occupation by Italy. And I submitted to him in this connection the various considerations which I had already put before him in previous interviews and which your Excellency had also recently laid before Baron Macchio.

To this Baron Burian replied that, notwithstanding those considerations of mine, he thought it well to make the said proposal to your Excellency, and that he would reply immediately to such proposals as your Excellency, in your own turn, should make on the subject.

Baron Burian has informed me that the transaction in question will render equally necessary the revision of certain treaties existing between the two Powers, such as those concerning the new railway connections, the arrangements regarding frontier traffic, the navigation of Lake Garda, etc.

I told Baron Burian that I should not fail to communicate immediately to your Excellency the proposals he made for the conclusion of the agreement to be stipulated between the two Governments.

Although Baron Burian refrained from revealing the substance of the cession of territories in southern Tyrol which the Imperial and Royal Government would be disposed to make, I was able nevertheless to infer that this would not extend much beyond Trent.

AVARNA.

No. 57.

The Italian Ambassador at Petrograd to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Petrograd, 29th March, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 29th.

I LEARN from an unimpeachable source that a serious attempt at peace has been addressed to this Government by someone speaking in the name of the Austro-Hungarian Government.

CARLOTTI.

No. 58.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 31st March, 1915.

HAVING carefully examined the proposals put forward by Baron Burian as the basis of an agreement. I find them on the one side too vague and indefinite, and, on the other, absolutely inadequate to attain the object at which both parties aim, namely, to create a situation which, by consolidating their reciprocal relations and eliminating all causes of friction, should render possible their cordial collaboration towards common ends of general policy.

I put aside for the moment the very grave question regarding the immediate or postponed fulfilment of the eventual agreement, which, whatever it may be, according to its alternative settlement, will inevitably affect the actual merits of the compacts to be made.

On the part of Italy, Baron Burian claims in the first place an undertaking to observe a friendly neutrality from the political and economical point of view. On this score it is necessary that we should have a clear understanding. If by these words is meant an undertaking to continue to maintain a perfect and sincere neutrality, such as we have hitherto maintained, I should have no objection to raise; but I must point out that the geographical situation of Italy in the Mediterranean forbids her showing any favour to one group of belligerents that might provoke reprisals on the part of the other who dominates the sea, unless she wishes to jeopardise the whole of her economical existence, subjecting her people to all the actual evils of a war, or else to be dragged, despite herself, into the struggle.

Baron Burian requests further that with regard to Albania, the agreement existing between Austria-Hungary and the decisions of the Conference of London should remain in force.

Now it is not possible for Italy to accord liberty of action to Austria-Hungary in the Balkans without at least obtaining that Austria-Hungary should completely cease to interest herself in Albania.

Coming next to the substance of the cession offered, I would refer merely in passing to some of the lesser and secondary questions enumerated by Baron Burian, because it is impossible to discuss them profitably until we are agreed upon the main point—that of the extent of the territories to be ceded.

I do not understand what justification there can be for the request for a lump sum as compensation for the investments made by the State in the territories to be ceded. Such investments, in so far as they were not repaid by the taxes levied upon the said territories, were necessarily repaid through the emission of the Public Debt, so that the point is covered by the quota of this public debt which we should come to assume.

Moreover, when Burian speaks of a public debt, of which a proportionate quota is to be assigned to Italy, to what period does he refer? Does he refer to the debt such as it was at the beginning of the war, or such as it is now when the cession comes to be agreed, or, yet again, such as it may be at the end of the war, to which time Baron Burian would adjourn the fulfilment of the agreement? I may point out that, so as to hope to arrive at an understanding upon questions of this nature, it is absolutely necessary to bring the discussion down to precise and settled figures.

From the expressions employed by Baron Burian I cannot so much as infer what may be the extent of the territory he offers us in Southern Tyrol. Even independently of any appraisal, on the possibility of the compensation being confined only to a cession

in the Tyrol. the phrase employed by Baron Burian, in which he refers to the City of Trent alone, adding that, in being more definite, it would be necessary to take into account the strategical exigencies of the Monarchy and the economic needs of the population, appears to me so sibylline that I cannot understand what it really is that the Imperial and Royal Government intends to offer us. And the reference subsequently made to a covenant regarding the navigation on Lake Garda renders the offer still more uncertain, since it seems to imply that even after the cession of Southern Tyrol the Imperial territory would reach as far as that lake.

If it is really desired to create a situation of harmony and cordiality between the two States for eventual future co-operation towards common ends of general policy, it is indispensable to eliminate for ever all serious grounds upon which may be reproduced the frequent outbursts of irredentism, besides establishing conditions of greater equality and common security in the frontiers between the two States and in the Adriatic; and to effect this the cession of a strip of land in the Trentino would certainly not be sufficient.

For these reasons I repeat that even apart from the question of the more or less prompt fulfilment of the eventual agreement, I must consider Baron Burian's proposals altogether insufficient as a basis of negotiations, inasmuch as they do not sufficiently satisfy national aspirations, appreciably improve our military conditions, or represent compensation adequate to the liberty of action accorded during the present war in the Balkans, the fate of which cannot but represent a primary political and economical interest for Italy.

SONNINO.

No. 59.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 1st April, 1915.

THE Italian Minister at Cettinje telegraphs as follows:

“Last night an aeroplane dropped several bombs, doing some slight damage and wounding four persons. Two bombs fell in the neighbourhood of the Royal Palace. Population greatly alarmed.”

I beg your Excellency to see Burian in accordance with instructions contained in my telegram of the 4th March (Document No. 36).

SONNINO.

No. 60.

The Italian Minister at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Telegram.)

Vienna, 2nd April, 1915.

recd. 2nd.

I COMMUNICATED to Baron Burian the result of the careful examination to which your Excellency submitted the proposals formulated by him as a basis of an agreement, and in conveying

to him the substance of your Excellency's telegram I intimated that you considered those proposals vague, indefinite and absolutely insufficient to reach the object aimed at by both Powers. Baron Burian told me that in pointing out that Italy should assume the undertaking to observe a friendly neutrality from the political and economical point of view, he had referred to the provisions of Article IV. of the Treaty of Alliance, but that by this demand he had not meant that Italy should absolutely act in such a manner as to expose herself to the danger of reprisals from other belligerent States.

As for your Excellency's demand that Austria-Hungary should completely cease to interest herself in Albania, Baron Burian remarked that this was contrary to the interests of the Monarchy, as Italy herself had recognised by the engagements assumed by the two Powers in accordance with the known understanding. Therefore Austria-Hungary could not agree to that demand.

Baron Burian recognised that the material settlement of the questions of the investments made by the State in territories to be ceded, and of the Public Debt upon which the quota to be assigned to Italy was to be proportioned, were matters entirely subordinate to the essential point, namely the extent of those same territories. It was therefore useless to occupy ourselves at present with these questions, which would be examined in due season and in detail, and which will not hinder the two Governments from arriving at an understanding. Referring then to what I had pointed out to him, namely that from the expressions he had employed, your Excellency could not succeed in ascertaining what was the extent of the territory which he offered in Southern Tyrol, Baron Burian gave me a brief memorandum indicating the limits of these cessions. And he added that he had already intended to give me this memorandum before I had requested an audience to-day, so that he might thus follow up his communication of last Saturday.

I transcribe here the text of this memorandum.

"The territories which Austria-Hungary would be disposed to cede to Italy on the conditions indicated would comprise the districts (*Politische Bezirke*) of Trent, Rovereto, Riva, Tione (with the exception of Madonna di Campiglio and its surroundings), as well as the district of Borgo. In the valley of the Adige the frontier should reach to Lavis, a locality which would belong to Italy."

When I then referred to the sentence uttered by him in our interview of Saturday and reproduced in your Excellency's telegram, namely, that it was necessary to take into account strategic exigencies and the economic needs of the population, Baron Burian observed that he had spoken of those two elements because not only in the interests of Austria-Hungary, but also in those of Italy, it was necessary to take them into consideration in tracing the frontier. As for his mention of a covenant regarding navigation on Lake Garda, Baron Burian said that he had thought it well to mention this because that covenant, like the others existing

between the two nations with regard to border commerce, would be submitted to revision, and naturally that which related to Lake Garda would cease to be in force, since Lake Garda would be comprised within the territories to be ceded to Italy.

Baron Burian further stated that he agreed with all that your Excellency said regarding the expediency of creating in reality a situation of harmony and cordiality between the two States for their eventual future co-operation towards common aims of general policy. That corresponded entirely with his own views, and he had several times so expressed himself to me; but he found it difficult to follow your Excellency's ideas where you mention the possibility of the repetition of outbursts of irredentism, and the need to establish conditions of greater equality and of common security on the frontier between the two States and in the Adriatic. And he added that it certainly was not right to speak of the cession of "a strip of territory in Southern Tyrol" when he was offering all the districts forming what is commonly known as the Trentino.

Having finally repeated to him the declaration contained in the last part of your Excellency's telegram, Baron Burian expressed the hope that when your Excellency was acquainted with the extent of the territory he offered you would change your opinion as to the importance of the cession, which could not be described as a mere strip of territory.

AVARNA.

No. 61.

The Italian Ambassador at Berlin to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

*Berlin, 2nd April, 1915.
recd. 3rd.*

(Telegram.)

FROM certain indications clearly confirmed from an authoritative source, I gather that Germany would not refuse to treat for peace with Russia.

BOLLATI.

No. 62.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

*Vienna, 6th April, 1915.
recd. 7th.*

(Telegram.)

BARON BURIAN begged me to visit him to-day at the Ballplatz.

He asked me whether I had received from your Excellency an answer to what he had communicated to me in our interview of the 1st instant, and when I had replied in the negative, he expressed the wish to address the following request to you: Since your Excellency had considered vague and insufficient his first proposal and had not yet replied to his precise proposal, he begged you to make known in your turn what were your own proposals, so as to enable him to endeavour to come to a reciprocal understanding on the question regarding the cession of territory.

AVARNA.

No. 63.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 8th April, 1915.

TELEGRAMS from Cettinje communicate that yesterday an aeroplane dropped four bombs on Podgoritza with several casualties, dead and wounded, amongst whom many soldiers.

I beg your Excellency to see Baron Burian in accordance with previous instructions, pointing out that this is a fresh violation on the part of Austria-Hungary of the agreements between the two Governments.

SONNINO.

No. 64.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 8th April, 1915.

TO satisfy the wish expressed by Baron Burian I here formulate the conditions which the Royal Italian Government considers indispensable if a normal and enduring situation of reciprocal cordiality and of possible future co-operation towards common aims of general policy is to be created between the two States.

Your Excellency will more fully explain to Baron Burian the reasons that support each of the proposals, in formulating which I have taken fully into account the various observations laid before me in the past regarding the needs of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

I trust that the Imperial Government will grant us with the least possible delay an answer which I hope may be acceptable.

Article I. is inspired by an important historical precedent, as well as by obvious reasons of a military character regarding the tracing of the new frontier.

Article II. is also justified by military considerations, as well as by ethnological reasons.

Article III. represents the only possible compromise between the announced exigencies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and those of the national principle.

Article IV. aims at slightly lessening the painful conditions of inferiority in which Italy finds herself in the Adriatic.

Article V. represents the condition *sine qua non* by which any agreement may to-day be concluded; without it no Government in Italy could seriously undertake for the whole duration of the war the engagements with which the last two articles, X. and XI., are concerned.

Articles VI. and VII. remove for the future a subject of friction and of disagreement between the two States, legitimately safeguarding Italian interests in the Adriatic without hurting those of Austria-Hungary.

Articles VIII. and IX. explain themselves.

Here follows the text of the articles :

ARTICLE I.

Austria-Hungary cedes to Italy the Trentino with the frontiers which were those of the Italian Kingdom in 1811, that is to say, after the Treaty of Paris on the 23th February, 1810.

Note to Article I. :

The new frontier detaches from the present one at Mount Cevedale ; it follows for some way the counterfort between Val Venosta and Val Del Noce ; then it descends the Adige to Gargazone between Merano and Bolzano, reascends the higher ground on the left bank, divides the Val Sarentina and the Valley of the Isarco at Chiusa and the dolomitic territory on the right bank of the Avisio ; excluding the valleys of Gardona and Badia and including Ampezzano, it rejoins the present frontier.

ARTICLE II.

Italy's eastern frontier is to be corrected in her favour, so as to bring the cities of Gradisca and Gorizia within the ceded territory. From Troghofel the new frontier is to detach from the present one, and to run eastwards as far as Osternig, thence descending from the Carnic Alps down to Saifniz. Thence by the counterfort between Seisera and Schliza it is to ascend the Wirsehberg and then to follow the present frontier as far as the summit of Nevea, and to run down from the base of the Rombone to the River Isonzo, passing to eastward of Plezzo. It is then to follow the line of the Isonzo as far as Tolmino, where it leaves the Isonzo to pursue a more easterly line, which passing on the eastern side of the heights of Pregona-Planina and following the track of the Chiappovano runs up to eastward of Gorizia and crossing the Carso di Comen ends at the sea between Monfalcone and Trieste in the neighbourhood of Nabresina.

ARTICLE III.

The city of Trieste with its territory, which is to be extended on the north until it includes Nabresina, so as to reach to the new Italian frontier (Article II.), and on the south until it includes the present judiciary districts of Capo d'Istria and Pirano, is to be constituted an autonomous and independent State in all that regards its internal, military, legislative, financial and administrative policies, and Austria-Hungary shall renounce all sovereignty over it. It is to remain a free port. It should not be entered by either Austro-Hungarian or Italian soldiers. It should assume a quota of the present Austrian Public Debt proportionate to its population.

ARTICLE IV.

Austria-Hungary cedes to Italy the Archipelago of Curzola, including Lissa (with the neighbouring islets of St. Andrea and Busi), Lesina (with Spalmadori and Torcola), Curzola, Lagosta (with the neighbouring islets and rocks), Cazza, Meleda and Pelagosa.

ARTICLE V.

Italy should immediately occupy the ceded territories (Articles I., II. and IV.), whilst Trieste and its territory (Article III.) should be evacuated by the Austro-Hungarian authorities and military forces, with the immediate discharge of all soldiers and sailors derived from one and the other.

ARTICLE VI.

Austria-Hungary is to recognise Italy's full sovereignty over Valona, and its bay comprising Sasseno, together with such territory in the *hinterland* as may be required for their defence.

ARTICLE VII.

Austria-Hungary is to cease completely to interest herself in Albania as comprised within the frontiers traced by the Conference of London.

ARTICLE VIII.

Austria-Hungary is to grant a complete amnesty followed by the immediate release of all those prosecuted and convicted upon military and political grounds who are natives of the ceded territories (Articles I., II. and IV.) and of the evacuated territories (Article III.).

ARTICLE IX.

For the delivery of the ceded territories (Articles I., II. and IV.) from their quota of responsibility in the Austro-Hungarian Public Debt as well as in the debt resulting from pensions to retired Imperial and Royal functionaries, and against the integral and immediate transference to Italy of all domanial property, movable or immovable, with the exception of arms, situated in the said territories, and in compensation for every State right concerned with the said territories, in all that may refer to them whether at present or in future, without any exception whatsoever, Italy will pay Austria-Hungary the capital sum in gold of 200,000,000 Italian lire.

ARTICLE X.

Italy undertakes to maintain perfect neutrality throughout all the present war with regard to Austria-Hungary and Germany.

ARTICLE XI.

For the entire duration of the present war Italy renounces all power subsequently to invoke in her own favour the provisions of Article VII. of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance; and Austria-Hungary is to make the same renouncement in all that regards Italy's effected occupation of the islands of the Dodecanesus.

SONNINO.

No. 65.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 10th April, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 11th.

I HAVE communicated to Baron Burian your Excellency's proposals contained in the eleven articles; and in explaining to

him in the most detailed possible manner the reasons supporting those proposals, I pointed out to him that in formulating them your Excellency had taken into the fullest account the various observations submitted to you in the past regarding the needs of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

I have expressed to him the hope that he would let me have a reply as soon as possible on the subject, and also the hope that this might be acceptable. At his request I then left him a written note in French giving the text of the said articles.

After attentively listening to me, Baron Burian confined himself to saying that he would examine with the greatest care your Excellency's proposals and would let me know his answer at the earliest possible moment.

AVARNA.

No. 66.

The Italian Ambassador at Nisch to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Nisch, 10th April, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 10th.

ACCORDING to confidential information a separate peace between Austria-Hungary and Russia might be possible.

SQUITTI.

No. 67.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 13th April, 1915.

IT is most urgent that your Excellency should expedite a reply to our demands.

SONNINO.

No. 68.

The Italian Ambassador at Sofia to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Sofia, 13th April, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 14th.

RUMOURS are in circulation of a possible separate Austro-Russian peace.

In Viennese political circles there is talk of peace between Austria-Hungary and Russia, and even that it is with the object of being free to deal with Italy.

CUCCHI.

No. 69.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Vienna, 14th April, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 14th.

I SAW Baron Burian to-day, and I requested a reply to our demands which we accounted most urgent.

Baron Burian said that he hoped to give me a reply on Friday evening.

AVARNA.

No. 70.

*The Italian Ambassador at Berlin to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Berlin, 15th April, 1915.*

(Telegram.)

recd. 16th.

THE rumours of a movement towards a separate peace between Germany and Austria-Hungary and Russia are persistently maintained and are constantly gaining ground.

BOLLATI.

No. 71.

*The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Vienna, 16th April, 1915.*

(Telegram.)

recd. 17th.

BARON BURIAN asked me to go to the Ballplatz to-day so that he might communicate to me his reply to your Excellency's proposals. He began by saying that the proposals of the Italian Government had been submitted to a careful examination on the part of the Imperial and Royal Government, which had been compelled with keen regret to record that for political, ethnological, strategical, and economical reasons, into which it would be superfluous to enter, a great part of these proposals, especially those formulated in Articles II., III. and IV. were unacceptable. The aggregate of these proposals would, in fact, create for the Imperial and Royal Government a situation irreconcilable with its vital interests, and would be but little calculated to attain the object at which the Italian Government had always declared that it aimed, namely that of consolidating the reciprocal relations between Austria and Italy, basing them upon complete good faith, eliminating every source of friction and rendering possible the collaboration of the two States in questions of general policy. On this subject Baron Burian pointed out that a modification of the frontier towards the Isonzo would render difficult the military defence of that frontier of the Monarchy and would bring the Italian frontier too close to the city of Trieste. Then the detachment of this city from Austria-Hungary would deprive the latter of her most important maritime outlet and would place in the hands of Italy the principal communications between that port and Germany. Finally, the question of the islands of Curzolari, which dominated Dalmatia, would render Italy mistress of those regions, whilst the Adriatic would become an Italian sea from the moment that Italy retained possession of Valona. Baron Burian added that being sincerely actuated by the above considerations which he had submitted to me, upon which he considered it necessary to insist, and which had already been placed before your Excellency, and wishing to attest to Italy to the furthestmost possible limits his desire to arrive at a definite and lasting understanding, the Imperial and Royal Government was disposed for its own part with regard to the territories of Southern Tyrol to extend the cession to which he had consented in the communication made to me on the 1st instant.

According to this fresh proposal the future line of frontier would detach from the present one near the Zufallspitze, and would follow for a distance the line between the district of Cleo on the one side and the districts of Schlanders and of Merano on the other, namely the line of the watershed between Noce and the Adige as far as Illmenspitze. The line of frontier would pass to the west of Proveis, so that this commune would continue to form part of the Tyrol, it would rejoin the Pescara torrent and follow the Thalweg of the latter to its confluence with the Noce, whence the northern frontier would detach from the district of Mezzolombardo and would rejoin the Adige to the south of Salorno. It would ascend the Geiersberg, follow the watershed of the valley of the Avisio by Castiore and would run towards the Horspitze and Mount Comp.

It would turn thence to the south, describing a semicircle which would leave the commune of Altrei to the Tyrol and would reascend as far as the hills of San Lugano. It would follow the confines between the districts of Bolzano and Cavalese, namely, the watershed between the valleys of the Avisio and the Adige and it would pass over Rocca and the Grimmjoch to Latemar. From the Carnon hill it would run down to the Avisio crossing this river between the communes of Moena and Forno, and rising again towards the watershed between the valleys of San Pellegrino on the north and of Travignolo on the south. It would rejoin the present frontier on the east of the heights of Bocche.

Consequently the Imperial and Royal Government would not be prepared to accept the line of frontier indicated by Article I. of your Excellency's proposals.

With regard to the proposal contained in Article V., according to which the territories ceded by Austria-Hungary would be immediately transferred to Italy, Baron Burian pointed out that the provinces accompanying that proposal, which even in time of peace would be impracticable for various reasons of general administration, etc., would be so in an even greater degree in time of war. And in this connection he added that without attempting to cite other historical instances, it sufficed to recall the procedure adopted on the occasion of the cession of Nice and Savoy to France in 1860, in which case also after peace had been concluded a certain number of months elapsed between the settlement of the respective covenants and the effective transference of the territories ceded.

I pointed out to Baron Burian that the precedent of Nice and Savoy did not apply to the present case.

But Baron Burian after replying that he could not agree with me on that point, added that nothing on the part of the Imperial and Royal Government opposed the acceptance of the proposal contained in Article VIII., regarding the amnesty to be accorded to persons belonging to the territories ceded to Italy and sentenced or subjected to prosecution upon military and political grounds.

Coming next to speak of the question of Albania in general and that of Valona in particular, Burian told me that the Imperial and Royal Government could not do other than place upon record

that it would be difficult to reconcile the proposal formulated by the Royal Italian Government in Articles VI. and VII. with the engagements undertaken by the Italian Government on four different occasions, namely: the Austro-Hungarian-Italian agreement of 1900 and 1901, and the decisions of the Conference of London; Italy's declaration of the 4th August of last year that she would remain faithful to the engagements assumed towards Austria-Hungary as well as to the decisions of the Conference of London, and that she did not wish to derive any profit in Albania from the fact that Austria-Hungary was engaged in war; and her formal declarations on the occasion of the Italian occupation of Valona.

On the other hand, the Imperial and Royal Government, impressed on its side by the necessity of maintaining the reciprocal rights and obligations resulting from the agreements in force and of persevering in the attitude always maintained towards the Albanian question, could not cease to be interested in Albania, a region so close to the sphere of Austria-Hungary's own "most perceptible" interests, to the creation of which she had contributed together with Italy not only politically but also by means of very notable sacrifices of a military (the partial mobilisation of 1913), economical and financial order. For the rest, in accordance with the Conference of London, the Albanian question had become a European question, so that no single Power could dispose of it either alone or in agreement with others, since the existence and neutrality of Albania had been guaranteed by Europe.

Therefore it is only with the consent of the Powers—an unrealizable eventuality during the war—that the political situation of Albania could be modified.

Notwithstanding this, the Imperial and Royal Government, faithful to the spirit of the Austro-Hungarian-Italian agreement regarding Albania, perceiving in the Albanian question one of the problems of general policy regarding which the collaboration of Austria-Hungary and Italy might eventually continue in the future, declares itself still disposed to discuss with the Royal Italian Government reciprocal interests in Albania on the basis of the present situation, or to submit to revision the mutual agreements whenever future political changes should make this appear necessary to one or the other of the parties.

Passing on to examine the engagements to be undertaken by Italy, Baron Burian intimated to me that the Imperial and Royal Government desired to draw attention to the fact that Turkey having united herself to Austria-Hungary by the fact of her participation in the war, the neutrality which Italy would engage herself to maintain until the end of the war must similarly include the Ottoman Empire.

With regard to Article XI., Baron Burian informed me that the Imperial and Royal Government would accept the proposals formulated in it, provided that in the said article after the words "present war" were inserted the phrase: "and with regard also

to territorial or other advantages that might accrue to Austria-Hungary from the treaty of peace that will terminate the present war."

And he added that the waiving on the part of the Imperial and Royal Government of compensation for the Italian occupation of the Dodecanesian Islands would also be subordinate to the same condition.

With regard, finally, to Article IX., Baron Burian informed me that without yet being in a position precisely to state the quota of the Public Debt concerning the territories to be ceded to Italy, or the lump sum to be claimed by Austria-Hungary as compensation for State investments in the territory in question, the Imperial and Royal Government must nevertheless at once declare that the figure proposed by the Royal Italian Government would be entirely insufficient and would not represent even approximately an equitable compensation. And he added that, to cite only one point, he should state that the value of the military buildings alone, situated in the territory to be ceded to Italy, notably surpasses the total sum proposed by the Royal Italian Government. Not desiring, however, to trammel the conclusion of the agreement by contentions of a financial nature, the Imperial and Royal Government declared itself ready to submit the question of pecuniary indemnity, in the event of a disagreement with Italy, to the Arbitration Court of the Hague.

In handing me then a memorandum of the matters communicated to me, Baron Burian concluded by expressing the hope that your Excellency would appreciate the sentiment which had induced the Imperial and Royal Government to make this further sacrifice in favour of Italy.

I answered Baron Burian that I would hasten to telegraph to your Excellency all that he had said to me in reply to the proposals you had formulated.

AVARNA.

No. 72.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.

(Telegram.)

Rome, 21st April, 1915.

I HAVE examined the replies given to your Excellency by Baron Burian regarding the cessions which Austria-Hungary would be disposed to make, and I regret to have to declare that they do not appear to me to form an adequate basis for an agreement which is to create between the two States that enduring and normal situation which is mutually desired.

On one point only, that which regards the Trentino, has the Imperial and Royal Government shown itself disposed to cede a little more than in its first proposals; but even in this there is no provision that will overcome the main disadvantages of the present situation, whether considered from the linguistic, the ethnological or the military point of view.

On all the other demands Baron Burian answers us with a complete negative which takes no heed of all the reasons urged by us.

With regard to Albania and Valona, the argument put forward by Baron Burian to sustain his refusal is that various compacts already exist between Italy and Austria-Hungary and that there is, moreover, a European agreement on the subject. What we demanded was exactly that those previous agreements with Austria-Hungary should be modified by mutual consent, the Imperial and Royal Government ceasing entirely to interest itself in whatever we might agree regarding this with the rest of Europe, just as we cease to interest ourselves (*see* Article XI. proposed) in what Austria-Hungary might settle with respect to the Balkans at the end of the war.

With regard to Article XI. it was already my own notion that the renouncement to invoke the provisions of Article VII. should refer not only to the war, but also to advantages which from the treaty of peace might result to one side or the other in the Balkans and the Dodecanesus respectively.

As to Article IX., I admit that it is possible still to discuss the matter of the amount of the quota to be assumed of the Public Debt of the Empire, but we cannot take into account the value of the investments that may have been made by the State in the ceded territories, and this for the reasons already expounded in my telegram of the 8th April.¹

Where disagreement appears to be insurmountable is on the subject of Article V. regarding the date of the eventual fulfilment of the agreement that might be reached. On this subject, too, I can do no more than refer to the reasons already stated why no Italian Government could make itself responsible for the integral fulfilment of an undertaking, which fulfilment had been postponed until the end of the war.

SONNINO.

No. 73.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Vienna, 21st April, 1915.

(Telegram.)

recd. 22nd.

I HAVE conveyed to Baron Burian the substance of your Excellency's telegram, intimating to him that his replies in our interview of last Friday regarding the cessions that Austria-Hungary was disposed to make, did not appear to your Excellency to afford a suitable basis for an agreement such as is mutually desired; and I then communicated to him the various observations which your Excellency has to offer upon those replies.

Baron Burian said that he took note of the communication, and as he desired attentively to examine your Excellency's observations, he would postpone making known his answers, but that he would let me have these as soon as possible.

AVARNA.

(¹) See Document No. 64.

No. 74.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

(Telegram.)

Vienna, 25th April, 1915.

ALTHOUGH I have always endeavoured in my interviews with Baron Burian to convince him of the necessity of not delaying to satisfy our national aspirations and of agreeing to your Excellency's proposals, pointing out to him the grave consequences by which a refusal on his part might be attended, he has continued to persist in idle discussions until now, as your Excellency will have been able to perceive, and he does not appear exactly to grasp the real state of things with us. But what cannot fail in particular to occasion surprise is the illusion under which Baron Burian still labours that the Royal Italian Government must end by being convinced of the great sacrifice made by the Imperial and Royal Government if it consents to the cessions of territory in Southern Tyrol, and of the impossibility of its extending those concessions.

Moreover, Baron Burian, as he has several times given me to understand, cannot yet realise the necessity in which the Royal Italian Government might find itself, in the event of its demands not being integrally accepted, of going to war with Austria-Hungary and Germany.

It is perhaps to be expected that as a result of the renewed and more insistent pressure the exertion of which on the part of the German Government is to be foreseen, Baron Burian may be induced to extend in part the cessions of territories in Southern Tyrol and to make some concession on the side of our eastern frontier.

But even admitting that Baron Burian should be induced to make concessions and to extend them as far as the actual limits traced by the Royal Italian Government, there would still remain to be determined the other important questions, namely of the establishment of Trieste as an autonomous State, of the cession of the Curzolane Islands, and of the Monarchy's desire to interest itself in Albania, regarding which, if the inclinations manifested to me by Baron Burian are to be taken into account, it is doubtful that the Imperial and Royal Government will give way.

If then, through unforeseen circumstances, the Imperial and Royal Government should end by submitting at the last moment even on these matters, as it has already done on the question of principle, there would still remain to settle the grave question of the immediate fulfilment of the agreement.

Regarding this question, which is by us considered a *sine qua non* of the said agreement, it is to be deemed beyond all measure difficult, as your Excellency asserts, that the dissensions existing between the Royal Italian Government and the Imperial and Royal Government on the subject should be settled after the decisive opposition offered by Baron Burian on this same question.

Therefore an agreement with Austria-Hungary on the basis of the proposals formulated by your Excellency seems almost unrealizable in the present state of things.

AVARNA.

*The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
Vienna, 29th April, 1915.*

(Telegram.)

recd. 30th.

I PROCEEDED to-day to the Ballplatz at the request of Baron Burian, and he told me that he had begged me to visit him so that he might inform me of his opinion regarding the observations made by your Excellency upon the replies given by him to the proposals formulated by the Royal Italian Government which I had communicated to him in our interview on the 21st inst.

In recalling that those replies had not seemed to your Excellency to constitute in the aggregate a basis likely to ensure that good understanding and enduring harmony which was the aim of both Governments, Baron Burian informed me that he had to record that the sincere desire which he had several times expressed to me to reach a definite agreement with Italy had met with a serious obstacle, in the fact that some of the said proposals affected Austria-Hungary's vital interests. Now the relinquishing of those interests would create for the Monarchy such a situation, not only towards Italy, but also towards the other Powers, that its share in the political collaboration which was your Excellency's object would naturally be diminished.

He observed therefore, to begin with, on the score of Trieste, that by virtue of the Austro-Hungarian constitution, this city enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy. It formed a territory apart, and its Communal Council was invested with the functions of the provincial diets. The Italian element was largely represented in the autonomous administration of the city. Its numbers, the level of its education, and its economic position, assured for it, apart from its constitutional guarantees, an existence satisfactory in all respects. By detaching Trieste and its surroundings from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and creating it into a separate State, a mortal blow would be struck at the economic prosperity of that city, which, deprived of its *hinterland*, would lose all its importance, a prospect not in any way to be modified even by annexation to Italy for which it would merely represent a superfluous port.

Trieste had always been an object of particular solicitude to the Imperial and Royal Government, which, in the interests, it is understood, of the State, would continue also in the future to favour its material and intellectual progress in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, whose prosperity depended entirely upon the bond uniting it to Austria-Hungary, which, whilst exacting the loyalty of its citizens, had never done anything to the detriment of their national character.

I could not refrain from pointing out to Baron Burian, as my own personal opinion, that we could not possibly admit in any way what he asserted, namely that the Imperial and Royal Government had done nothing to the detriment of the national character of the

population of Trieste. And I reminded him on this subject of the interminable question of the Italian University in Trieste, which had given rise to frequent lengthy discussions and confidential measures between the two Governments and had provoked on several occasions strong agitations in Italy, besides the favoured treatment shown to the Slav schools at the expense of the national Italian culture in that city.

But Baron Burian, proceeding, dealt with the proposal regarding the cession to Italy of the Curzolare Islands and he observed that this question also brought us up against insurmountable obstacles. Abstracted from the purely Slav nationality of their inhabitants, those islands, in the hands of Italy, would constitute a strategic position that would dominate on the one hand the upper part of the Adriatic, where there could no longer be a question of equilibrium for Austria-Hungary, and would threaten on the other the very possession of the adjacent coast.

With regard to the cession of territories proposed in Austrian Friuli, Baron Burian pointed out that this would deprive Austria of a frontier that was indispensable to her for the defence not only of a part of her littoral, but also of several of her central provinces, and that it would moreover bring the Italian frontier nearer to her principal port. Besides this, the Italian element was only feebly represented, at least in a great part of the territory in question, which was peopled by Slavs.

Finally, referring to Tyrol, Baron Burian informed me that if, in accordance with its future delimitation, such as it was outlined in the last Austro-Hungarian proposal, part of the valley of the Noce, besides the valleys of Fassa and Ampezzo, were excluded from the cession of territories, the reasons which had prevailed in that respect were certainly not those of wishing to retain some region in which Italian was spoken.

This was not the case, particularly regarding the valleys of Fassa and Ampezzo, the population of which was Ladinian (Grisons), and desired with all the strength of its soul to remain united to Austria-Hungary, gravitating as it did towards the north from the point of view of all its exclusive interests.

Imperative strategic reasons created the necessity for Austria-Hungary to retain the eastern side of the valley of the Noce, which would remain insecure without possession of the heights protecting the region of Bolzano. And, he added, that supposing that we on our side should oppose his point of view regarding one or the other of these localities with arguments more or less analogous, it was necessary not to lose sight of the fact that the question for Austria-Hungary was one of a friendly cession of a part of her time-honoured possessions, and that the arguments of him who in the present instance relinquishes secure boundaries, should, in the nature of things, take precedence of the arguments of him who acquires them.

Coming then to speak of the demand concerning immediate execution of the territorial cessions, Baron Burian told me that he did not abandon the hope that your Excellency upon submitting

the matter to a searching examination would recognise the material impossibility of such a provision.

The absolute secrecy of the negotiations forbade until the conclusion of the agreement all the military, administrative, and other preparations which must precede the transference of the territory ceded.

All these preparatory measures demanded a certain amount of time, and could not be improvised at the last moment.

And this leaving out of all account the situation that would be created for Austria-Hungary if possession were taken by Italy of the territory in question at a moment in which the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was engaged in a vast war, and in which, consequently, the greater part of her territory was deprived of means of defence, her army being concentrated in the various theatres of operations.

Wishing, however, to render as easy as possible the position, at a given moment, of the Italian Government before Parliament and public opinion, provisions might be considered that would demonstrate in the eyes of all, the real and serious desire which existed faithfully to discharge the engagements assumed. To that end, as soon as the agreement were concluded it would be possible to proceed to appoint a joint commission which would be entrusted with the settlement of the many questions of detail resulting from the cession of territories. The appointment and operation of this commission could not leave a shadow of doubt regarding the integrality and conclusiveness of the cession itself. Baron Burian added that if your Excellency on your own side desired to propose any other provisions towards the same end, he would not fail to examine them with the best intentions and to accept them as far as might be possible.

I told Baron Burian that notwithstanding these good intentions I must remind him with regard to this question of all that I had already laid before him in previous interviews, namely, that the immediate execution of the agreement was a condition *sine qua non* of the agreement itself, so that I could only refer him to the reasons already given him why no Italian Government could become guarantor of the integral execution of all the engagements assumed, the fulfilment of which was to be postponed until the end of the war.

Passing on to speak of the proposals of your Excellency in Article IX., Baron Burian said that although it would be easy to prove that the sum offered by the Italian Government as a quota of the Public Debt and as compensation was by a great deal inferior to the value of the public effects would that be ceded to Italy, he shared the opinion expressed by your Excellency that such a question should not trammel the understanding provided that this were established upon all other points of the projected agreement. It was precisely because he was inspired by ideas of this order, and to afford yet another proof of his desire to surround the cession of territories by external and reassuring guarantees that he proposed to submit if necessary the financial controversy to an international tribunal, namely, to the Court of the Hague.

On the subject of the Albanian question Baron Burian repeated the expressions of his sincere desire to discuss with your Excellency reciprocal interests in Albania, taking into account the circumstances which had undergone a change during the present war, and to reach a fresh understanding on the subject with the Royal Italian Government which might, in placing things again upon European grounds, lead to Austria-Hungary's disinteresting herself, provided that Italy would similarly disinterest herself, in Albania with the exception of Valona and the sphere of interests that had their centre there, and provided that sufficient guarantees might be established against undertakings by any other Powers in Albania, an eventuality as menacing to the political and maritime interests of Austria-Hungary as to those of Italy.

I told Baron Burian that I would lose no time in acquainting your Excellency with the replies he had made to me regarding your communications, but that for my own part I thought it well to point out to him that with the exception of certain formal suggestions made by him on the subject of some of the proposals he persisted in pronouncing himself in the negative, particularly with regard to those formulated in Articles I., II., III., IV. and V.

AVARNA.

No. 76.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Italian Ambassador at Vienna.
(Telegram.) *Rome, 3rd May, 1915.*

I BEG your Excellency to convey the following communication to the Minister for Foreign Affairs there, of which you will leave him a written copy :

The alliance between Italy and Austria-Hungary proclaimed itself, from the first, to be an element and a guarantee of peace, aiming first of all as the principal object at common defence. In view of subsequent events and of the new situation arising out of them, the two countries found it necessary to propose a new object no less essential, and in course of the successive renewals of the treaty, they devoted themselves to safeguarding the continuity of their alliance, stipulating the principle of preliminary agreements regarding the Balkans, with a view to reconciling the divergent interests and propensities of the two Powers.

It is very evident that these stipulations, loyally observed, would have sufficed as a solid basis for a common and fruitful action. But Austria-Hungary, in the summer of 1914, without coming to any agreement with Italy, without even giving her the least intimation, and without taking any notice of the counsels of moderation addressed to her by the Royal Italian Government, notified to Serbia the ultimatum of the 23rd July, which was the cause and the point of departure of the present European conflagration.

Austria-Hungary by disregarding the obligations imposed by the Treaty profoundly disturbed the Balkan *status quo*, and created a situation from which she alone should profit to the detriment of interests of the greatest importance which her ally had so often affirmed and proclaimed.

So flagrant a violation of the letter and the spirit of the Treaty not only justified Italy's refusal to place herself on the side of her allies in a war provoked without previous notice to her, but at the same time deprived the alliance of its essential character and of its *raison d'être*.

Even the compact of friendly neutrality for which the Treaty provides was compromised by this violation. Reason and sentiment alike agree in preventing friendly neutrality from being maintained when one of the allies has recourse to arms for the purpose of realising a programme diametrically opposed to the vital interests of the other ally, interests the safeguarding of which constituted the principal reason of the alliance itself.

Notwithstanding this, Italy exerted herself for several months to create a situation that should be favourable to the re-establishment between the two States of these friendly relations which constitute the essential foundation of all co-operation in the domain of general policy.

With this aim and in this hope the Royal Italian Government announced its willingness to come to an arrangement having for its basis the satisfaction in an equitable degree of the legitimate national aspirations of Italy and serving at the same time to reduce the disparity existing in the reciprocal position of the two States in the Adriatic.

These negotiations did not lead, however, to any appreciable result.

All the efforts of the Royal Italian Government met with the resistance of the Imperial and Royal Government, which even now, after several months, has consented only to admit the special interests of Italy in Valona, and to promise an insufficient concession of territory in the Trentino, a concession which in no way admits of the normal settlement of the situation, whether from the ethnological, the political or the military point of view.

This concession, moreover, was to be carried into effect only in an indeterminate epoch, namely not until the end of the war.

In this state of things the Italian Government must renounce the hope of coming to an agreement, and sees itself compelled to withdraw all its proposals for a settlement.

It is equally useless to maintain for the alliance a formal appearance which could only serve to dissemble the reality of continual mistrust and daily opposition.

For these reasons Italy, confident of her just rights, affirms and proclaims that she resumes from this moment her complete liberty of action, and declares as cancelled and as henceforth without effect her treaty of alliance with Austria-Hungary.

SONNINO.

No. 77.

The Italian Ambassador at Vienna to the Minister for Foreign Affairs.


(Telegram.)

Vienna, 4th May, 1915.

I HAVE made to-day to Baron Burian the communication prescribed by your Excellency.

AVARNA.

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